

THE SERVANT-LEADERSHIP ROLE OF SELECTED CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and to investigate how this leadership ideal is manifest in their daily professional lives. I employed a qualitative case study design, using the constructivist paradigm. The data gathering methods consisted of several interviews with each of the six participants, and extended field observation engagements with two of the principals.

For the participants of this study, family background, professional and extra-curricular experiences, and priests, were important sources of their notions of servant-leadership. Participants perceived Faith in Jesus Christ, and the positive outcomes of their Faith-informed professional practice as progenitive of their notions of servant-leadership.

The culminating framework from this study identified faith in Jesus Christ as the foundation of participants' servant-leadership. According to this framework, respondents' childhood experiences, mental models, passions, motivations, and professional convictions, served as antecedents to their identity formation which, in turn, propelled them towards servant-leadership. This framework delineated five aspects of servant-leadership: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, community-inspired vision, relational credibility, sustained trust, and service. Service was identified as the culminating dimension, with the understanding that servant-leadership is established and strengthened in the very act of rendering service (through the day-to-day characteristics of servant-leadership), without which servant-leadership for Catholic school principals was considered meaningless.

According to the findings from study data, servant-leader signifying and inspiring qualities required of the servant-leader, included the following: altruism, patience, compassion, caring for the interests and growth of followers, living by example, and the unselfish desire to serve others. Additional fruits of servant-leadership are empowerment and respect for followers, establishment of healthy relationships, support for one another, collaborative leadership, offering constituents different possibilities for development, community building, self sacrifice of the leader for his/her community, and the servant-leader truly representing the idea of service to members of the school community.

Strategies for success in servant-leadership included tenacity of purpose, respect for all in the school community, fostering collaboration, care and trust of followers, and avoidance of needless reprimands in the event of failure. An underlying theme of this study is that servant-leadership provides hope for followers because of its exceptional interest in helping them develop their potentials and grow to become leaders.

This study generated several implications for policy, practice, and further research. First, the policy requiring principals of Catholic high schools to be practicing Catholics and to pattern their leadership practices on the servant-leadership model warrants continuance. Second, a policy that superintendents of Catholic school districts make an intentional choice to promote servant-leadership would serve a good purpose. Third, using vivid servant-leadership symbols as a way of making a lasting impression on new principals during the hiring process is a practice worth continuing. Fourth, directors, superintendents, principals, and chaplains need to continue the practice of exemplary servant-leadership as an inspiration to new and other leaders. And, finally, a future

researcher on this same topic may wish to include the perceptions of staff members, parents, and students in focus groups to generate in-depth data for analyses.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The days when leaders controlled, dominated, and manipulated organizations at their pleasure are over (Block, 1993). Today, organizations are more complicated, environments less stable, and uncertain (Sackney & Mitchell, 2001; Walker, 2007). Power and wisdom are no longer viewed as prerogatives of leaders (Bhindi & Duignan, 1997). Traditional leadership based leadership on goal achievement, productivity, outcomes, dependency, and predictability, but contemporary leadership places emphasis on serving the client, addressing the needs of followers, ethical and moral responsibility, mutuality, change, and improvement (Bhindi & Duignan; Sackney & Mitchell; Wheatley, 2004). Leadership is being redefined, and there are increasing demands for a clear shift away from traditional hierarchical control systems and procedures as a foundation for influence to notions of leadership as service and stewardship (Bhindi & Duignan). Block explained, “Stewardship is a way to use power to serve through the practice of partnership and empowerment” (p. 65). For Block, service rather than control is everything. Service is aimed at customers and subordinates.

The shifts in philosophy and theories of leadership have similarly challenged traditional thinking about schools and educational leadership (Sackney & Mitchell, 2001), and Catholic schools are no exception. Sergiovanni (1993) expressed his belief that the leadership that counts in today’s schools is one that taps the emotions of

followers, appeals to their values and responds to their connections with other people. Sergiovanni emphasized, “It is a morally based leadership that represents a form of stewardship, a commitment to serve others and to serve ideals” (p. 20).

The shift from traditional authoritarian leadership to a caring and follower-centered leadership (Patterson, 2003) calls for a renewed acknowledgement of the work of Greenleaf (1977) who argued, “The only authority deserving one’s allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to the clearly evident servant stature of the leader” (p. 10). Implied in Greenleaf’s argument is the caveat to leaders that leadership today is not paternalism, but it is better acknowledged as stewardship that views partnership and empowerment as important (Crippen, 2006; Block, 2006). Such kind of leadership practiced in the school community leads to stronger learning school communities with increased learning outcomes (Sergiovanni, 1992) that set students, staff, and parents on the path to initiatives and personal development. This kind of leadership is called servant-leadership (Greenleaf), a leadership theory that promotes follower empowerment, credibility, vision, and ethical beliefs (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005).

Walker (2007) advocated for servant-leadership in today’s school institutions. He declared, “The servant-leadership concept can become an incredible force of good in school systems when infused into the culture of learning communities. Servant-leadership builds trust in relationships” (p. 21). Walker further noted, “Servant-leadership is safe to follow and, consistently models a value-based core of commitments as people are served and educational purposes are pursued” (p. 21). Crippen (2006) agreed and explained that servant-leadership is collaborative, empowering, and a serving way to build learning

communities. In addition, she noted that servant-leadership is built upon the premise of individual respect, stewardship, and service to one's school community. In short, servant-leadership offers hope and insight for a new epoch in human development, and for the establishment of better, more caring institutions (Spears, 2006).

If there is a need for servant-leadership in schools, for the Catholic school leader, servant-leadership in his/her daily professional life is "a fundamental, foundational and essential expression of his/her vocation within the Faith-community" (Walker & Scharf, 2001, p. 16) because of his/her special calling as a Christian leader. The Vatican II document *Gravissimum educationis* (1965) stressed that the purpose of Catholic schools is to give holistic education to children while promoting Gospel values. Gospel values, in Catholic theology, denote qualities such as trust in God, honesty, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, community, servant-leadership, simplicity, justice, peace, love, faith, and hope. These values are presented in the teachings of Jesus Christ in the four Gospels of the Bible, and epitomized in the beatitudes as described in the Gospel of Matthew 5: 3-10. The values identified should by no means be considered an exhaustive list of the Gospel values. The emphasis of the Vatican II documents for the promotion of Gospel values in Catholic schools is an implicit call on Catholic school leaders to live up to the responsibility of promoting Gospel values by their leadership style. Accordingly, Duignan (2007) pointed out that the promotion of Gospel values and Catholic identity in Catholic schools has to be an intentional choice. And all Catholic school leaders involved need to decide on their schools' future direction. However, Duignan cautioned that the "decision to foster a school's Catholic mission is not to be equated with maintaining the

status quo. Instead, it involves making positive institutional changes that will ensure a vibrant catholicity” (pp. 8-9).

Mulligan (2003, 2005) outlined eight biases which affirm the distinctive purpose and focus of Catholic education’s vision. He maintained that distinctiveness does not mean being better than public education. It means there is a difference. And, implied in this manner of defining Catholic education is, that there is something more. There is something more in content, in operating style, in emphasis, in understanding of education, and expectation of Catholic education. The biases are:

1. The bias of a shared understanding that Catholic education will enhance and respect life because of the image of the learner as having been created in the image of God and loved by God.
2. A bias in hiring Catholic educators, men and women who are in the Catholic tradition, and embrace its values so as to continue to have Catholic schools.
3. A bias towards community, to live, worship, and journey as a community.
4. A bias for prayer and for speaking the language of the sacred through daily prayer, sacramental preparation and celebration, liturgies to mark and celebrate liturgical seasons, visible symbols, retreats for staff and students.
5. A bias for religion or faith or Catholicity across curriculum.
6. A bias for dynamic chaplaincy intended to serve the principal in his or her pastoral leadership of the Catholic high school community, through counselors, retreat facilitators, and social justice activists.
7. Compromising the bias for the religion class and religion teaching is to seriously compromise Catholic education’s vision; and

8. A bias for justice and peace.

The challenges inherent in the above-mentioned biases of Catholic education call for a leadership style that promotes morality and stewardship; a leadership style that cares for followers rather than the enhancement of its own power; a leadership style that employs hierarchy in new ways (Blanchard & Hodges, 2005).

The employment of hierarchy in new ways was reflected in the Vatican II document *Lumen gentium* (1964) which did not do away with hierarchy, but put forward the term “The people of God” to affirm the dignity of all before God. The dignity of all of God’s people was made clear in Chapter three of the same document which saw the relevance of Church hierarchy in terms of ministries exercised for the good of “The People of God.” Chapter three of *Lumen gentium* clearly spelled out that the purpose of hierarchy is to serve those put under their charge (subsections 18, 20, & 21). Reflecting on the new ways of using hierarchy and authority in the context of Vatican II, Ball and Mckamey (2004) observed:

When someone is put in a position of leadership – a president, a principal, a parent, a priest- he or she must also be given power to fulfill his or her responsibilities. Power can be used for self interest or for servant-leadership. If [leaders in the Church] use their authority for personal gain or abuse their power, they contradict their vocation. . . . Authoritarian leadership will be rejected. Servant-leaders will be respected and followed. (pp. 53-54)

The relevance of the above quotation for all leaders involved in the Church’s mission cannot be underestimated. Like other leaders, Catholic school leaders are called upon to exercise leadership as servant-leaders as they fulfill their Christian mandate of leadership for the good of their followers.

The National Congress (1992) echoed the new ways of viewing leadership and hierarchy in Catholic schools. The document declared, “Leadership on behalf of Catholic

schools involves a shift from vertical models to collegial models” (p. 29). As well, the document also reminded stakeholders, “The Catholic school is an integral part of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, build faith communities, celebrate through worship, and serve others” (p. 17). Consequently, Mulligan (2005) wrote that the purpose of leadership in Catholic schools:

Is intended to serve the Catholic education community. We do not need careerists who look for power, perks, status, enhanced salary and upward mobility. We urgently need the non-careerist whose first concern is, in a spirit of faith, what is best for the kids. (p. 188)

Mulligan’s observation as reflected in the above quotation was aptly summed up by Grace (2000) who emphasized that educational leadership is a *vocation to serve*.

Problem Statement

The extent to which the idea of service is actually realized in practice generates empirical questions of great interest. For example: To what extent do Catholic high school principals in Saskatchewan practice servant-leadership? If they do, how are the practices expressed in relation to this leadership ideal? What does it mean for them to serve a Catholic high school community as principals? What are the advantages and challenges they experience in pursuing the servant-leadership ideal? How does this leadership ideal help in the building of stronger learning school communities in contemporary times? Such questions have provided some of the undergirding motivation for this study.

There is no single universally approved leadership concept which suggests a unique source of leadership success (Walker & Scharf, 2001; Philips, 2002). However, it is becoming obvious that a leadership theory that promotes effective, ethical, supportive, and responsible leadership, and in the process engenders an enabling environment for

constituents to attain their highest potentials is the desired leadership style for contemporary times (Sergiovanni, 1993; Wheatley, 2004). Servant-leadership may be this kind of leadership (Spears, 2006). Prosser (2007) argued that one would have to possess the head-in-the sand qualities of an ostrich to ignore the evidence from “US companies such as TDIndustries, Southwest Airlines, Synovus, Financial Corporation, Herman Miller Inc., and other oft-quoted examples of servant-leadership in action” (p. 66). According to Prosser, the above mentioned companies often score well in the Fortune lists of *best companies to work for*. Other examples of servant-leadership in action include UK companies such as Honda, Asda, Flight Centre, Hicocks and Corgi (Prosser). While the successes of the business companies cited above exist as evidence of the persuasive case for servant-leadership, the available literature reveals very little research relating to the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals, and how it is manifested in their daily professional lives. For example, the literature is seemingly silent on how Catholic high school principals view servant-leadership and its effects in the life of their schools. This apparent silence raises the question as to how we might describe the perceptions of Catholic high school principals regarding their understanding of the servant-leadership ideal in the school context.

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in this study is to explore the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and to investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. To guide this inquiry process, three research questions are delineated.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What are the sources and substance of Catholic high school principals' notions of servant-leadership?
2. What are Catholic high school principals' perceptions of their servant-leadership role?
3. How is servant-leadership manifest and experienced by Catholic high school principals in their daily professional lives?

Significance of the Study

Sharpe (1995) argued that in the 21st century, apart from professional skills such as a high level of knowledge and expertise in management, and maintaining focus on the purpose of the organization, leaders need to have the qualities of caring for people and setting personal example for followers by utilizing ethical and moral base for leadership judgment. Northouse (2004) agreed when he wrote, "Effective leadership is in high demand. In particular, there is a call for strong ethical leadership" (p. xi). According to Sergiovanni (1990), the ethical and moral leadership demanded in the 21st century schools is servant-leadership which implies, "furnishing help and being of service to parents, teachers, and students" (p. 152). Congruent thinking by Lyman (2000) led to her conclusion that a radically different perception on leadership, an ethic of caring, is needed in today's schools if our purpose as leaders is to nurture children and bring them up to be caring, moral, productive members of society.

Blanchard and Hodges (2005) presented a somber picture of uncaring leadership.

They observed:

The world is in desperate need of a different leadership role model. Pick up any daily newspaper, and you will quickly find examples of abandoned values, betrayed trust, exploitation, and manipulation, and manipulation committed by people of power and influence. Corporate leaders exploit privileges of position, bringing ruin to employees and investors. Meanwhile, citizens of underdeveloped countries languish in poverty and hopelessness in a leadership vacuum. Church leaders experience crisis of integrity, compromising their churches and breeding skepticism and disillusionment. Families and personal relationships drift away from mutual commitment and head toward battlegrounds of self-absorbed conflict over rights to individual fulfillment. (p. 3)

Undoubtedly, the leader of a school community whose leadership style is fraught with any of the leadership flaws expressed by Blanchard and Hodges in the above quotation, would do the school community no good. In the context of this study, the citation draws attention to the need for school leadership to be follower-focused, by practicing a leadership style that views the follower as priority. In light of the above, this study is significant for a number of reasons.

First, this constructivist case study, based on participants' lived experiences presents servant-leadership as a practical and effective leadership role in Catholic high schools. The research findings proffer to principals beyond this study that servant-leadership need not be merely anecdotal but practical, and that servant-leaders are people who care for followers while living through the daily challenges of their leadership.

Second, the study investigates and explains how Catholic high school principals model a value-based core of commitments to staff, parents, and students in the practice of servant-leadership in the face of constant change and diversity brought about by globalization and democracy.

Third, this study explores how principals in Catholic high schools combine the duties of both school administrators with moral and ethical leadership by using the

servant-leadership concept. In addition, the study is valuable not only to Catholic high school principals, but also to principals in Catholic elementary schools and public school jurisdictions who may be interested in implementing servant-leadership in their school settings.

Fourth, the study outlines strategies for effective leadership in contemporary schools settings. These include relationships with parents, staff, and students and the creation of healthy learning school communities.

Fifth, the study adds to the literature on servant-leadership as it specifically relates to the Catholic high school context, and offers the possibility of some transfer to other school contexts.

Delimitations

The following delimitations apply to this research.

1. The study is limited to selected Catholic high school principals in the Province of Saskatchewan.
2. The study was conducted in two Catholic school divisions located in Saskatchewan.
3. The study is delimited by the constructivist paradigm utilizing the qualitative case study research design.

Limitations

The research findings may be affected by the following limitations.

1. Participants were interviewed two times for a period of between 60 to 90 minutes.
2. Only two of the participants were selected for observation.

3. The research design employed in the study is limited to case study, therefore findings are limited in their general transferability.
4. The study does not specifically seek to understand the perspectives of staff, parents, students, and the school communities of participants as they relate to the servant-leadership role of principals.
5. The findings of the research are limited by respondents' understandings and their abilities to communicate their perceptions.
6. The researcher is a clergyman; thus, some interpretations may have been influenced by his biases. The interpretation of data provided by respondents were screened in analysis by researcher's interpretation of participants' understandings. It is expected that the research design minimized as much as possible, the effects of my biases, assumptions, and presuppositions, in the interpretation of data.
7. The conceptual framework was not viewed as a concept to be tested, but as a primer or research tool to get the conversation started.

Assumptions

In conducting this study, I assumed that:

1. A sufficient and practical level of trust and mutual respect existed in relationships between myself, as the researcher, and participants for the honest sharing of information.
2. Participants practiced servant-leadership as principals of Catholic high schools.
3. Participants were not inhibited in sharing their experiences with me.

4. Participants willingly and openly answered questions.
5. Qualitative case study research is a valid and valuable research design for achieving access to data on the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals as per research questions.

Definitions

The following are terms defined as they are used in the study.

1. **Principal:** Refers to the person in the school, under the supervision of the director, who is responsible for the general organization, administration, and supervision of the school, its programs and professional staff, and for administrative functions that pertain to liaison between the school and the board of education (*Education Act*, 1995, Saskatchewan). In this study, Catholic high school principal refers to the person having the same responsibilities in a Catholic school as stated in the Saskatchewan *Education Act*, 1995, but with additional responsibilities of fostering an atmosphere of Christian love modeled after the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
2. **Catholic high school:** A high school within a separate school division established pursuant to s. 49 of Saskatchewan *Education Act*, 1995, where the minority of electors are Catholic and which is authorized by the local Catholic Bishop as a Catholic school.
3. **Servant-leadership:** A leadership ideal “that attempts to simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community,

personal involvement in decision making, and ethical behavior” (Spears, 1995, p. 2).

4. **Followers:** In this study *followers* and *constituents* refer to those being led. Specifically, the term *followers* and *constituents* apply to staff, parents, students, and the school community as a whole.

The Researcher

I was ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood on August 13th 1988 in Ghana, West Africa, and, in the first two years, I was involved in parish pastoral work as an assistant pastor. My experiences during the two years as assistant pastor, opened my eyes to the piercing truth that leadership does not simply mean the successful application of rules and regulations. Leadership is most effective when it is people-centered (Greenleaf, 1970), because it is persons that bring success to institutions. To echo Autry (2001), “Efficiency is not the same as effectiveness, and a preoccupation with efficiency has proved, over and over again, to be the enemy of effectiveness” (p. xiv). Simply put, effectiveness requires listening to the needs and hungers underlying what people are saying, and most importantly respond in such a manner that the one speaking feels he/she has been understood and has made an impact (Sofield & Kuhn, 1995).

After two years of pastoral work, I was appointed to a Catholic boarding high school, where I served as chaplain for three years. After some years of service in the same school, I became the senior housemaster (the head of teachers in charge of students’ boarding facilities and general welfare) and assistant principal with special duties. My experiences as chaplain, senior housemaster and assistant principal confirmed my previous experience as assistant pastor that leadership is about relationships and care for

followers (Autry, 2004). The caring and relationship task of the leader relates to whether people feel they are understood and their needs are being met individually (Wheatley, 2004). Engaging in one-on-one relationships with staff, parents, and students yielded a lot more positive results than merely distributing beautiful brochures outlining the details of school rules and regulations. Convinced that there was care and concern for their needs, staff members, parents, and students developed a stronger sense of allegiance to the school community and took useful initiatives for the good of the school community. To echo Lyman (2000), staff, parents, and students “felt that their individual actions made a difference to the life of the school” (p. 9).

A retroactive reflection on my leadership experiences and relationships with staff, parents, and students led me to the conclusion that I had been practicing *unintentional* servant-leadership (Wheatley, 2004) during my days as a high school teacher. I however acknowledge that there were times when the practice of caring leadership was demanding and quite costly.

I first came across the term servant-leadership in my theological studies, but I had limited it to Church leadership. It was during my studies at the Master’s and Doctoral levels at the University of Saskatchewan that I gained a better insight into the servant-leadership concept. According to the literature, servant-leadership is not limited to Church leadership but practicable in all organizations including schools (Greenleaf, 1977).

In my own educational life, I am grateful to the servant-leaders, both priests and teachers, who God put on my path at the various stages of my education including the doctoral level. Their servant-leadership qualities have demonstrated to me, in concrete

and existential terms, that exhibiting concern and care for followers not only brings meaning to people's lives, but helps them develop to their full potentials. This study, therefore, is an inquiry into the world of selected Catholic high school principals in order to gain knowledge about how they exercise servant-leadership to build healthy learning school communities for the good of students, staff, and parents.

Organization of the Study

Chapter One of my study, provides the purpose, significance of the research, research questions, definitions, delimitations, limitations, and assumptions.

Chapter Two provides a review of the relevant literature: a) the context of the principalship in Saskatchewan, b) the relevance of servant-leadership in Catholic schools, c) a tracking of the historical beginnings of servant-leadership, d) the theory of servant-leadership, e) the differences between transactional, transformational and servant-leadership, f) the characteristics of servant-leadership, g) the dimensions of servant-leadership as the foundation on which the ten characteristics of servant-leadership thrive, h) the barriers, paradoxes, and downsides of servant-leadership, i) strategies for practicing servant-leadership and, j) the conceptual framework of the study.

In chapter Three, I offer the philosophical orientation of the study, the research design, research methods, research analysis, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical issues.

In chapter Four, I provide a description of the context of the participants and the interview data, and in chapter Five, I present the observation data.

In chapter Six, I restate the research questions, examine the emergent themes in light of the relevant literature, provide the study implications for policy, practice, and further research, and then offer my reflections and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Notwithstanding their original mandate, as dynamic institutions, schools (public or separate) keep changing, thus, applying of leadership strategies of the past to circumstances of the present in schools inevitably leads to irrelevance and ineffectiveness (Maxcy, 1991). Mulligan (2005) expressed concern about “. . . the rapidity with which education and Catholic education have changed in just the last few years” (p. 186), and considered the pace of transformation to be mind boggling and a great challenge to leadership. For relevant leadership, Sergiovanni (2005) recommended servant-leadership, especially as the unquestioning trust given to school leadership by their constituents has declined in recent years (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Spears (1998) and Takamine (2002) believed that servant-leadership, coined by Greenleaf (1970), offers hope and wisdom for the creation of better, more caring institutions in a new era in human development. According to Takamine, the blessing of servant-leadership lies in its potential for application to different situations by a diversity of individuals. Bass (2000) maintained that the strength of servant-leadership is in “. . . its many links to encouraging follower learning, growth, and autonomy” (p. 29).

Discussing leadership within Church institutions, Bourbonnais (1974) observed:

Always honored in the Church, the words “servant” and “service” have found new relevance, especially since John XXIII’s call for re-emphasis of the Church’s obligation to live by service and poverty. In the official documents of Vatican

Council II, “servant,” “service,” “serve,” occur over and over, more than a thousand times. (p. 5)

Echoing these thoughts, *The National Congress* (1992) stated, “The Catholic school is an integral part of the church’s mission to proclaim the Gospel, build faith communities, celebrate through worship, and serve others” (p. 17).

This literature review provides an overview of servant-leadership and the characteristics expected of servant-leaders. It consists of a) the context of the principalship in Saskatchewan, b) relevance of servant-leadership in Catholic schools, c) beginnings of the concept of servant-leadership, d) servant-leadership model, e) differences between transactional, transformational, and servant-leadership, f) the ten characteristics of servant-leadership identified by Greenleaf (1970), g) dimensions of servant-leadership, h) challenges and tensions of servant-leadership, i) strategies for practicing servant-leadership, and, j) the conceptual framework of the study. Figure 2.1 presents a diagrammatic representation of the literature review.

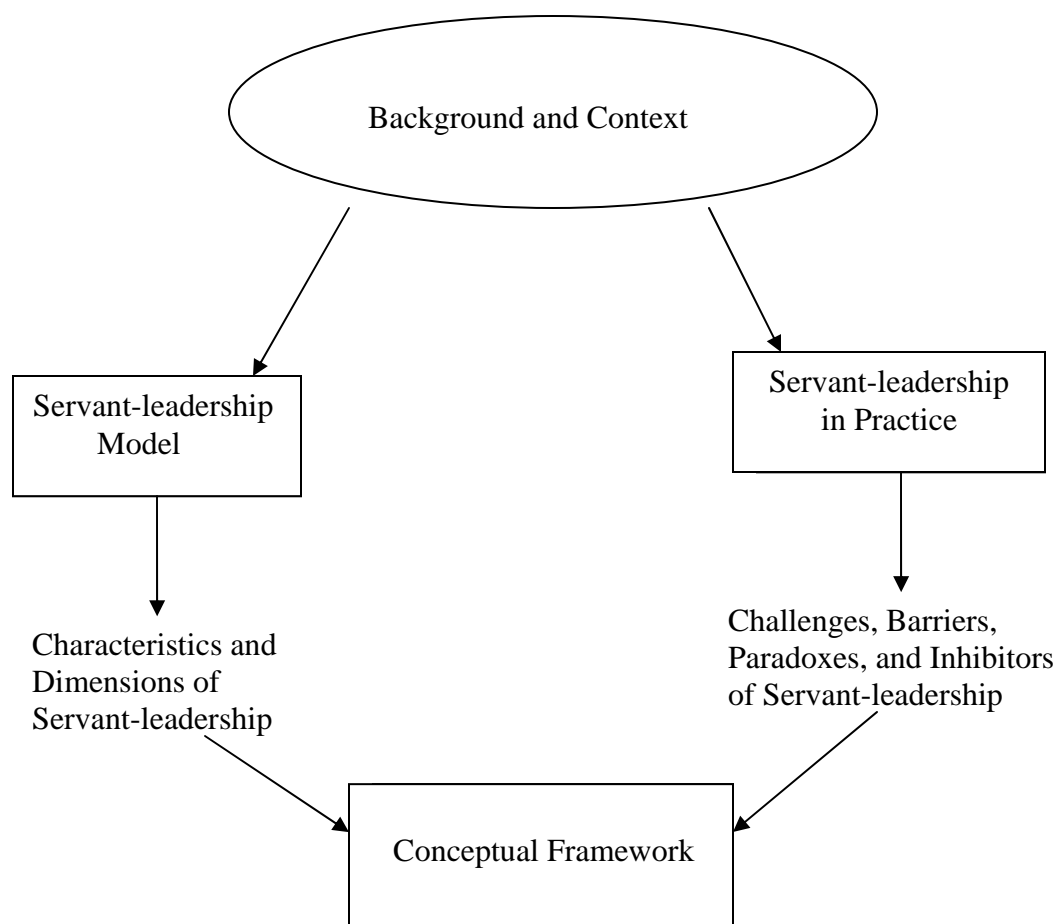


Figure 2.1. Components of literature review.

Context of the Principalship in Saskatchewan

Schools in most Western democracies are faced with new challenges and responsibilities as government-initiated accountability-driven reform and restructuring policies filter down through school systems thereby adding additional challenges to school principals (Fennel, 2002; Daniel & Griffith, 2004). Phillips, Raham, and Renihan (2003), and Tamney and Kerlenzig (1999) argued that schools are undergoing significant changes and have become complex as a result of rapid and systematic educational reforms. Dukacz (2007) noted that changes in society from the absolute, objective, and universal values of the 1920s to 1950s to the more relative secular and multicultural

values of the succeeding years have changed the principalship. The same scenario holds for the province of Saskatchewan (Roher & Wormell, 2000). Renihan (2002) observed, “One noteworthy development has been the move, in schools, from a predominantly hierarchical/authoritarian model of leadership to one characterized by a sharing relationship” (p. 7). That contemporary school leadership is characterized by a sharing relationship was remarked by Walker and Sackney (2007) who described the school community as “. . . an ecological place of and for connections, relationships, reciprocity, and mutuality” (p. 257). In such a community, caring school leaders have a better opportunity to make a difference (Lyman, 2000).

Demographic changes brought about by immigration and urbanization (Noonan, 1998; Ghosh & Douglas, 1991), and the concomitant challenges of multiculturalism, multiplicity, and population growth have also had repercussions on the principalship in Saskatchewan. Carr-Stewart (2003) observed that, “Although the total provincial population remains stable, the constituent parts are undergoing profound change, which is reflected in the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school population” (p. 225). These changes imply a need for adoption of a flexible leadership style that meets the needs of the different population groups.

Since societal and demographic changes exacerbate the complexity of school management (Mulligan, 2005), Senge’s (1990) counsel that systems that undergo change demand a diversity of leadership throughout the life of the organization merits serious consideration by today’s principals. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) called for leadership to be grounded in a new way of understanding the world” (p. 3) and emphasized the need to fit leadership style in schools to today’s kaleidoscopic school communities. Mulligan

observed that “The expectations placed upon Catholic school principals today are frighteningly challenging” (p. 187). The many relationships that have developed within schools require a new understanding from the school leader (Phillips, Raham & Renihan, 2003). Mulligan acknowledged the unique situation of school administrators in Catholic systems who bear the additional responsibility of promoting Catholic values in their school community. And, as Philips, Raham and Renihan suggested, “Versatility and a range of styles are advantageous [in contemporary school contexts], as is the ability to recognize which style is most effective” (p.19). As to the need for versatility in leadership in contemporary schools, Leithwood, Begley, and Cousins, (1995) observed that:

Principals do not see themselves simply applying a well-rehearsed repertoire of solutions, over and over again, to the same problems – a technical view of their role. Rather, adaptation of old solutions to new contexts and circumstances, as well as fresh thinking about largely novel problems seem to describe better a significant proportion of the demands faced by principals. (p. 49)

Daniel and Griffith (2004) advised that multiple changes and transitions in the principalship require a re-visiting of their philosophies of leadership, which implies a consideration of putting people at the centre of things, and building a collaborative sense of what needs to be done (Bennis, 2003).

For Sergiovanni (1993), “Things are different today. The rights of people to be involved are more established than in the past. People are smarter than ever. And diversity and complexity are accepted as part of the administrative landscape” (p. 20). According to Tschannen-Moran (2004) the days when school leaders were highly respected and largely unquestioned members of society are over, since nowadays leadership is acknowledged only if it can be trusted and if it is centered on people. Bennet (2001) added another dimension by reminding school leaders that today’s schools need a

moral leadership directed at social responsibility, and the development of various forms of intelligence to harness the will of the various partners.

Similarly, Crippen (2006) maintained that educational leaders must espouse new ways of leadership as our schools move toward democratization: “Servant-leadership may be a vehicle for major systems change at every level in educational organizations” (p. 331). Sergiovanni (1999) had already proposed servant-leadership for today’s schools and focused on it as an approach to effective leadership. He questioned:

What are we about? Why? Are students being served? Is the school as learning community being served? What are our obligations to this community? With these in mind, how can we best get the job done? (p. 25).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) seemed to ask similar questions when they argued that effective leadership must consider the needs and values of those being served. According to Patterson (2003), servant-leadership has the necessary tools to provide the needs of followers.

The above makes clear that the changing context of the principalship reinforces Senge’s (1990) prescription that leaders in the *new environment* operate as designers whereby they adjust to new situations and help people develop and reach new understandings.

Relevance of Servant-Leadership in Catholic Schools

The National Congress (1992) argued, “Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is deeply spiritual, servant-like, prophetic, visionary and empowering” (p. 22). Ciriello (1996) concurred and pointed out that “The heart of Catholic school leadership lies in effective spiritual leadership . . . that . . . is servant-leadership – to use Robert Greenleaf’s term – in which the leader is a servant who needs people as much as they

need him or her” (p. 1). For Arthur (1998), the Catholic school was to be considered as one dynamic unit, interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent community in which “Leaders are essentially the servants of the needs of people in the faith-community and the moral idea that binds them together” (p. 58). Duignan (2007) echoed the perception that the Catholic school is a community of the ‘people of God’ and not just an institution or organization, and Miller (2007) agreed:

Leadership is understood as a *diakonia*, a ministry for the Church and the wider society. It is about being in the midst of colleagues as “one who serves” (cf. Lk 22: 27); it is about stewardship of a great intellectual, cultural and religious patrimony. (p. 16)

Understandably, a faith and learning community needs an adaptive leadership that espouses an ethic of care, justice, and moral leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Fullan, 2003; Starratt, 2004). For Blanchard (1996), Sergiovanni (2000), and Covey (2002), this kind of leadership is servant-leadership.

Walker and Schraf (2001) pointed out that “Catholic educators have a high calling as they obediently follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and seek the grace to bear His image and likeness in their work” (p. 15). Walker and Scharf further indicated that for Catholic school principals, servant-leadership is “. . . a fundamental, foundational and essential expression of their vocation within the Faith-community (p. 16). Congruent thinking led Mulligan (2005) to state, “Catholic education, by its very nature, is a call to live differently and offer something more: a perspective about our world rooted in the scriptures and social teachings of the church” (p. 39), implying an imitation of the leadership style of Jesus. Arthur (1998) maintained that “For a Catholic school the values underpinning its leadership would indeed largely be derived from religious belief” (p.

51). As the Vatican II document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1990) reminded Catholic school leaders:

At least since the time of the [Vatican II] Council, therefore, the Catholic school has had a clear identity, not only as a presence of the Church in society, but also a genuine and proper instrument of the Church. It is a place of evangelization, of authentic apostolate and of pastoral action-not through complementary or parallel or extra-curricular activity but of its very nature: its work of educating the Christian person. (para. 33)

In short, the Catholic school discovers its meaning and vision in the Church and does not separate faith from education. Because of its Judeo-Christian origins and its applicability in varying contexts, servant-leadership offers that opportunity (Wilkes, 1998).

It is no surprise that Catholic Education Boards of Saskatchewan have recommended servant-leadership to their administrators. For example, Greater Saskatoon Catholic schools Board has recommended in its *Code G: Personnel and Employee Relations* (paras, 1 & 7, 2004) that its administrators carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities in the spirit of servant-leadership to Church, students, staff, parents, parish, and community. Mulligan (2005) agreed when he wrote that leadership in Catholic education is not a career but a vocation, and is intended to serve the Catholic education community.

Genesis of Servant-Leadership

According to Metcalf-Turner and Fischetti (1996), Greenleaf (1977) is credited by Spears (1996), Blanchard (1997), Covey (2002), and Frick (2004) for formulating and popularizing the notion of servant-leadership. As a devout Quaker (a Religious Society of Friends founded in England in the 17th century that tended toward minimal hierarchical structure), Greenleaf was familiar with the concept of servant-leadership. He spent most of his 38 year professional career at the American Telephone and Telegraph Company

(AT & T) in the field of management research, development, and education and after retirement started a second career that focused on the role of education in society and spent 25 years as consultant to businesses, foundations, universities, churches, institutions, and seminaries in the United States, Europe, and the Developing World. In 1964, he founded the Centre for Applied Ethics, now renamed the Robert Greenleaf Center.

Greenleaf coined the term *servant-leadership* after reading Hesse's (1971) *Journey to the East* (Spears, 1995) in which a group of men accompanied by their humble servant, Leo, undertook a mythical journey. All went well until Leo disappeared. This created confusion and aimlessness, and, lacking the leadership of their *servant*, the journey had to be abandoned (Sims, 2005). The wayfarers later discovered that Leo was not their servant, but Head of the great Noble Order of a distinguished monastic community. The image of Leo as the servant and leader transformed Greenleaf's understanding of leadership. He concluded that a true leader is willing to be a servant to others, and that this aspiration to serve makes a leader great. Greenleaf's "... seminal work, *The Servant as Leader* (1977), has sold over 200,000 copies worldwide and continues to exert a powerful and growing influence on educators and leaders in business, higher education, service-learning organizations, and religious institutions" (Metcalf-Turner & Fischetti, 1996, p. 114).

Wilkes (1998) pointed out that the notion of servant-leadership originated in Judeo-Christian theology. God demanded of the patriarchs and kings of the Old Testament (Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, David, Rehoboam) to serve the people and not lord it over them. According to Wilkes, the Israelites demonstrated their preference

for servant-leadership when the elders advised King Rehoboam, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (I Kings. 12:7, The New King James Version). According to Blanchard (1998), the word *servant* (along with serve and service) features more than 1,300 times in the Bible.

Whether one is a Christian or not, Jesus Christ’s life, His work, and His words depict Him as a leader whose deeds and vision changed the course of human history, and provided a leadership ideal worth emulating (Batten, 1998). Jesus gave this advice to his disciples in Matt. 20: 25-26:

You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. (as cited by Blanchard, 1998; & Sanders, 1994)

The appointment of the seven deacons in Acts 6 represents the service nature of leadership intended for those who served. According to Wilkes (1998), the term *servant* used in Mark, 10: 43 is the Greek word *diakonos*, which means *to wait at table, to provide or care for, to minister, or to serve*. *Diakonos* is the root of the English word *deacon*. The word slave used in Mark, 10: 44 is the Greek word *doulos*. Wilkes, further pointed out that the radical nature of Jesus’ concept of leadership lies in the use of slave because slavery was repulsive to the Jews of the first century who considered such a comparison to be a terrible attack on their dignity because it connoted a person bound to do the will of a master or superior. Jesus used *servant* and *slave* to describe the highest form of leadership.

In Luke 4:18-30, Jesus declared in his inaugural homily that he had come to serve and to proclaim the good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty

to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. This central message was that he had come to serve and not to be served (McNeal, 1998). Philippians 2:5-11 links Jesus' divinity, with His coming to earth as a servant. Jesus exemplified a true servant by what he said and did when he washed the feet of his disciples (Jennings and Stahl-Wert, 2003). According to Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003), in Luke 22: 26, Jesus, seeing his disciples not understanding his message about service, said to them:

But not so among you, on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the one who serves.

And in Mark 9: 35, he told them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be the last of all and servant of all" (Mk, 9: 35). The words and actions of Jesus offer a challenge as well as a good example. Jesus' words "It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit" (Jn. 15: 16), are a reminder to Christian leaders to imitate Him in their practice of leadership (Helm, 1996).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Catholic school leader, for whom the proclamation of Gospel values forms an important part of his/her leadership (*Gravissimum educationis*, 1965), needs to exercise leadership in imitation of Jesus the servant-leader.

Servant-Leadership Model

Servant-leadership values followers and seeks to promote their welfare and interests as an effective way of promoting organizational goals (Patterson, 2003; Drury, 2005). The primary purpose of the servant-leader is to serve others by investing in the development and well-being of constituents for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the common good (Page & Wong, 1998). Much of the current literature that

supports serving and valuing people was presaged by Greenleaf's (1977) work on servant-leadership (Sarkus, 1996). Greenleaf's model established service as the characteristic of the leader that attracts followers who will pass on this quality to others (Spears, 1996; Nixon, 2005). An important aspect of servant-leadership is the ability to create leaders from followers (Covey, 2002; Winston, 2005).

Spears (1995) pointed out that at AT & T, Greenleaf experienced the management practices promoted by Taylor (1916/2005) and McGregor (1957/2005) whose theories influenced business leadership education. Greenleaf (1970) concluded that old leadership practices increased level of stress within organizations. He argued that the enemy is strong natural leaders who have the potential to lead, yet choose to follow a non-servant. Greenleaf viewed such leaders to be more interested in power than in serving their followers, and thus declared, "The great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness" (p. 21). According to Greenleaf, servant-leadership:

Begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (p. 27)

For Greenleaf, servant-leadership is a moral principle whose *raison d'être* is the satisfaction of the needs of followers. Yukl (2002) also wrote that servant-leaders must attend to the needs of their followers to help them become healthier, wiser, and more ready to accept responsibilities.

Blanchard (2002) identified two types of leaders: those who are leaders first and those that are servants first. The former tend to be controlling and to give orders when it comes to decision making, while the latter take on leadership if they perceive an

opportunity to serve. The difference is that servant-leaders have as their primary aim to be helpful, while those who are leaders first lead because of their love for power.

According to Greenleaf (1977), the best test of the servant-leader can be seen through answering the following questions:

Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27)

Duignan (2007) interpreted these questions as the test for any form of leadership in Catholic schools. According to him, such leadership must be emancipatory, elevating, mutually empowering, and driven by love, and demands careful stewardship and husbandry of very valuable resources; that is people. Since the core of servant-leadership is service, self-interest should not motivate the servant-leader, instead, the leader should ascend to a higher plane of motivation (Pollard, 1996; Russell & Stone, 2002; Greenleaf, 1977).

For power sharing, collaboration, and development of people to be effective, leadership must be based on meeting the needs of the followers rather than of the organization (Patterson, 2003). Collaboration by the servant-leader means abandoning of the self to the strength of others and admitting that we cannot know or do everything by ourselves (DePree, 2004; Wheatley, 2004). The core of the servant-leadership model is the leader's ability to turn the traditional hierarchical power structure upside down (Spears, 2002a), so as to put others first. Bruffee (1993) maintained that collaboration is the "... willingness to grant authority to, courage to accept the authority granted to oneself by peers and skill in the craft of interdependence" (p. 12). Active collaboration with followers allows the servant-leader access into the thoughts of followers for better

service (Walls, 2004). Servant-leadership is service orientated and advocates a group orientated approach to decision making so as to strengthen institutions and to improve society (Spears, 1995).

As a servant, the leader is always searching, listening, and expecting to make the world a better place for his/her followers (Blanchard, 2002). The servant-leader listens to concerns and problems rather than acting on prejudgments or from a position of authority. Listening and getting to know the needs and aspirations of followers, and a readiness to empathize with their difficulties and frustrations is a servant-leader's worthy responsibility (Autry, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The servant-leader's concern and care for people is reflected in listening to them, and in redirecting them when they deviate from goals; the focus being on service that leads to the growth and development of followers (Blanchard, 1997).

Servant-leaders detract from their aim if they are primarily motivated by the desire for power or personal gratification (Metcalf-Turner & Fischetti, 1996). They work hard to accept and empathize and not to reject outright the suggestions, methods, and ideals of others so as to develop people and help them strive and to flourish (Blanchard, 1997). For Russell and Stone (2002), vision, honesty, integrity, truth, modeling, pioneering, and appreciation of others are key attributes and values in servant-leadership that helps followers to grow.

From his study of Greenleaf (1970, 1977), Spears (1995, 1998) concluded that servant-leadership leads to a holistic approach to work, and to promotion of a sense of community at the work place. According to Spears (1994), servant-leadership is a transformational approach to life that motivates leaders to build a better and more caring

society. Greenleaf (1977) attributed the founding of caring societies to individuals, thus, he indicated that becoming a servant-leader begins within the servant and not within society. Autry (2001) observed that initiating the process of servanthood within a person demands a strong foundation of beliefs, values, and ethics, while role modeling of servant-leadership behavior encourages group functioning at a higher level.

Servant-leadership is not a quick “fix approach.” and should not be construed as something that can quickly be instilled within an institution (Spears, 1998). According to Spears, servant-leadership, at its core, is a long term transformational attitude to life and work and is essentially a way of being that creates the capacity for bringing about positive change throughout society. In transformational leadership, the leader’s primary focus is on organizational objectives. But in servant-leadership, the focus is on followers, because leaders trust them to undertake actions that are in the best interest of the organization (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004).

Daft (2005) explained, “Servant-leadership is leadership upside-down” (p. 230). This is because the leader does not seek to promote his/her self interest, but rather ardently desires to encourage followers to grow as persons and become leaders themselves. According to Daft, leadership flows out of service as it enables followers to grow and become what they are capable of being. Power is not the primary aim of the leader, but is shared with constituents. The servant-leader’s first responsibilities are to relationships and people, and servant-leadership is preferable to transformational and transactional leadership, which form the subject of the next section (Lubin, 2001).

Transactional and Transformational Leadership Versus Servant-Leadership

Burns (1978) believed that leaders are either transformational or transactional, but according to Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004), other people “. . . view leadership as a continuum with transactional leadership at one end and transformational leadership at the other” (p. 2). For many, *transactional leadership* is the traditional industrial model of leadership (Daft, 2002), while *transformational leadership*, is the modern style of leadership in which leaders devote considerable energy to leading and valuing the gifts and abilities of their workers (Bass, 1985). By contrast, servant-leadership is propelled by the overarching desire to serve others (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004).

Transactional Leadership

According to McShane and Glinow (2000), transactional leadership is “. . . leadership that helps organizations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and ensuring that employees have the resources needed to have the job done” (p. 450). Its primary components have been defined as:

1. Providing contingent rewards, where the leader identifies paths that link the achievement of goals to rewards;
2. Exhibiting active management with the leader actively monitoring the work of subordinates, employing corrective measures in the face of deviations from standards, and enforcing rules to prevent mistakes; and,
3. Emphasizing passive management where the leader intervenes after deviations from accepted standards occur. Corrective measures or punishment are utilized in response to unacceptable standards (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007).

Power is a major concept of transactional leadership (Stroh, Northcraft & Neale, 2002). The transactional approach coincides with *Theory X* assumptions of McGregor (1957/2005) in which the leader is the traditional boss who oversees employees (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998). Transactional leadership approach follows highly structured bureaucratic systems in administering day-to-day tasks, being concentrated on task completion and employing reward and punishment (Tracey & Hinkin). For example, politicians who win votes by promising tax reduction exhibit transactional leadership (Northouse, 2004). Such approaches are leader orientated. And, according to Chemers, (1984), the relationship between leader and follower is one in which “. . . [t]he leader is clearly the central figure and prime actor” (p. 90-91). This approach to leadership “. . . assumes that the best information and ideas for solving problems are found in the upper echelons of the organization and should be passed down and implemented by those in the lower echelons” (Owens, 2004, p. 280).

Transactional leadership appears to have characteristics similar to those of servant-leadership (Burns, 1978). However, in this leadership, the leader’s actions may not benefit the follower and may lead to detrimental gain like that of Adolf Hitler and Germany (Whetstone, 2002). According to Yukl (2002), in contrast to servant-leadership, transactional leadership focuses attention on the personal growth of the leader or organization first, and that of the follower second, while servant-leadership primarily focuses on the follower first (Greenleaf, 1977). Because of contemporary societal and educational changes, transactional leadership does not seem to serve the purpose of present day schools if the principal is to succeed in promoting the interest of constituents in the school community.

Transformational Leadership

Northouse (2004) referred to transformational leadership as “The process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 170).

Transformational leadership has become the more popular style of leadership during the last two decades, and has challenged the traditional top down bureaucratic style of transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). For Bryant (2003), “Transformational leaders are active leaders that have four distinguishing characteristics: Charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration” (p. 36). Charisma is the degree of pride, faith, and respect leaders stimulate their constituents to have in themselves, their leaders, and their organization. Inspiration is the capacity to encourage constituents mainly through communication of high expectations. Intellectual stimulation is the regularity with which leaders stimulate constituents to be innovative at work. Individualized consideration is the extent of personal care and encouragement of self-development a leader conveys to constituents (Bass, 1990).

The main focus of the transformational leadership is to establish a mutual relationship between leader and follower through which both act to improve each other's lives (Burns, 1978), and to bring about organizational change (Northouse, 2005). Owens (2004) noted, “The result is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders” (p. 269). This relationship empowers people within the organization and increases efficiency and effectiveness, while personalizing the worker and the work environment (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007). Such positive relationships create an organization that desires and craves success. This leadership has its roots in the

Human Relations approach to leadership (Bryant, 2003). More specifically, it is a procedure for building commitment to organizational objectives and then empowering followers to achieve those objectives (Yukl, 2002). Transformational leadership's similarities to servant-leadership has led to the question: "Is servant-leadership just a subset of transformational leadership or vice versa?" (Stone et al., 2004, p. 4).

Differences between Transformational Leadership and Servant-Leadership

Transformational leadership and servant-leadership are so similar that the question has been raised by Stone et al. (2004), "Are transformational leadership and servant-leadership the same theory, except for their use of different names?" (p. 4). Both emphasize the appreciation and valuing of people, and listening to, mentoring, and empowering followers, but, according to Stone et al., "Transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational objectives while servant-leaders focus more on the people who are their followers" (p. 349). Walker and Sackney (2007) argued that "Transformational leadership is usually about achieving significant organizational purposes and servant-leadership is about helping each person grow a wholesome sense of personal significance" (p. 258), so that the extent to which leaders transfer their focus from organization to followers is the crucial difference in determining whether the leader is a transformational leader or a servant-leader (Stone et al.).

For Stone et al. (2004), servant-leaders focus on their followers, and ". . . do not have particular affinity for the abstract corporation or organization; rather, they value the people who constitute the organization" (p. 5); in other words, they value human dignity. The transformational leader has a more macro focus related to organizational success and takes initiative that involves for instance certain risks to end outmoded practices. The

servant-leader on the other hand centers on the individual with most organization members involved in decision-making processes and generally arriving at consensus (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004). According to Reeves (2002), consensus does not however mean unanimity.

For the servant-leader, relationships take priority over task and product (Lubin, 2001), and, as Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004) indicated, may result in more “. . . skilled people, more interpersonal relationships, creation of shared visions and clear goals” (p. 87). In the context of business organizations where servant-leadership is practiced, chasing of profits becomes secondary, as attention to people is the priority (Harvey, 2001).

Russell and Stone (2002) pointed out that while both transformational and servant-leaders are influential, the latter achieve influence in a nontraditional way through persuasion and a respect for constituents that allows them extraordinary freedom to exercise their gifts. Thus, servant-leaders use service to define the reasons for meaningful work and to provide needed resources (Stone et al., 2004).

Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) further suggested that another difference between servant-leadership and transformational leadership is that “. . . servant-leadership leads to a spiritual generative culture, while transformational leadership leads to an empowered dynamic culture” (p. 80). Spiritual generative culture allows followers to focus on their own development and on that of others, and provides organizational processes that promote growth, while empowered dynamic culture leads not only to better skills of followers, but to higher expectations being placed on them.

According to Wheatley (2004), spirituality in servant-leadership is “. . . an awareness that people have something beyond the instrumental or utilitarian. People have deep yearnings, a quest for meanings, and an ability to wonder. This is a nonreligious view of what spirituality might mean” (p. 246). For Kurtz and Ketcham (1992), spirituality is that which allows a person to get *beyond* the narrow confines of self.

Drury (2005) for example viewed servant-leadership as far too complex to be reduced to a set of attributes, but for others like Stronge (1998), Blanchard (1997), Covey (2002), and Yukl (2002), such leaders do exhibit distinctive characteristics that are in harmony with the ten identified by Spears (1995, 2002, 2004) from Greenleaf’s (1977) writings. These characteristics include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and, building community. These characteristics should be viewed as lenses through which the servant-leader’s role can be viewed rather than a set of skills or techniques (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). The characteristics will now be described in a more grounded manner.

Characteristics of Servant-leadership

Spears (2004) believed that the ten qualities of servant-leadership occur naturally within servant-leaders and could be further developed and improved through learning and practice. He considered them to be essential in day-to-day practice.

Listening

Greenleaf’s (1991) essay described the necessity of listening for understanding (Spears, 1998). The traditional heroic picture of leaders is that they possess the most important information and knowledge without need for listening to others (Murphy,

2000). Whatever a leader's level of scholarship, to discover, clarify, or refine his/her calling, he/she needs to start by listening (Spears, 1998). Spears defined listening as the ability “. . . to listen receptively to what is being said (and not said) . . . coupled with regular periods of reflection” (p. 4). Good listening involves an active effort to comprehend the world from another's perspective (Covey, 1989). A true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf reminded leaders that listening is not simply hearing with the ability to repeat, but to seek for meaning through verbal and nonverbal communication and observation skills. Listening is a critical way by which leaders demonstrate respect and appreciation for followers (Nix, 1997).

True listening builds strength in other people, and is about *doing* (learning listening skills) and *being* – bringing one's full presence to the encounter (Frick, 2004). According to Spears (2004), “Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills” (p. 13) which are indispensable for the servant-leader, and need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. Roethlisberger (1941/2005) confirmed the power inherent in listening. He said that often, “. . . people did not really want anything done about the things of which they were complaining. What they want was an opportunity to talk about their troubles to a sympathetic listener” (p. 163).

Sympathetic listening is an attitude “. . . rooted in a genuine interest in the viewpoints and perspectives of those served” (Spears, 2002, p. 229). According to Greenleaf (1977), it can be cultivated if the servant-leader is guided by St. Francis' serenity prayer (as cited in Dollen, 1990): “O Divine Master, grant that I may not so

much seek . . . to be understood as to understand” (p. 60). In fact, Baggett (1997) pointed out that, “Great communicators are great listeners” (p. 111). A strong commitment to nonjudgmental listening is as crucial as the ability to speak persuasively and effectively. Greenleaf wrote that, “Long ago, I discovered that the depth to which someone will share what is going on in their lives, personal or professional, indicated the degree of trust they have in the listener” (p. 96). For Greenleaf, listening receptively to employees builds a high level of trust and autonomy within an organization.

According to Cashman (1999), for servant-leaders to be effective listeners to others, they need to practice listening to themselves in order to properly and authentically listen to others. Authentic listening requires listening only not to the words but also to the emotions, fears, and underlying concerns of oneself and of others. A servant-leader will authentically listen to others through a variety of communication skills that may include dialogue, coaching, reflective thinking, and/or enquiry (Greenleaf, 1991). To solve problems, and diagnose issues, a true servant-leader will first listen. According to Sofield and Kuhn (1995) “Listening gives the leader access to people and their needs, hopes, weaknesses, and strengths. It reveals the state of the community” (p. 37). Listening benefits followers and when combined with regular periods of reflection also leads to the growth of the servant-leader (Spears, 2004).

Empathy

Spears (2004) pointed out that empathy is “. . . the capacity for participation in another’s feelings or ideas” (p. 137), and to accept and recognize people for their special and unique spirits. Empathy does not imply agreement, but the ability to understand the other person (Fryar, 2001). Like listening, the ability to empathize builds trust among

followers (Greenleaf, 1991) and requires receptive listening. An empathetic leader attracts people to him/her because people do not care about how much the leader knows until they know how much he/she cares (Maxwell, 1993). Studies have confirmed that when people believe that their leaders understand their concerns, they do their best to execute decisions, even those they disagree with, as “. . . grumbling and resistance tend to fade away” (Fryar, p. 57). Individuals naturally have personal problems and appreciate the leader who empathizes with their situation (Fryar). For Sullivan (2004), “The servant-leader . . . accepts people as they are and empathizes with them” (p. 72), however, he/she rejects substandard efforts, while being tolerant of mistakes and less-than-perfect performance.

Sullivan’s (2004) explanation of the notion of servant-leadership does not imply a laissez-faire leadership style that over-empathizes with followers. According to Blanchard (1998), servant-leaders hold followers responsible for their actions while viewing mistakes as opportunities for growth and a departure from the status quo that unravels the talents individuals have for the good of the community. A good test of servant-leadership is the ability to tolerate the imperfections of followers, since anyone can lead perfect people (Greenleaf, 1995). Fryar (2001) agreed and argued that the servant-leader with an empathetic spirit has a heightened awareness of the need for constituents to grow and mature gradually, and this leads to providing them with better service. In the Gospel of John 8:1-11, the adulterous woman was not condemned but was given the opportunity to do better. Schools are organizations of people with emotions that cannot be overlooked (Sharpe, 1995), so that staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders need to be related to as people, and empathized with.

Healing

Spears (2004) considered healing as one of the strengths of the servant-leader, because “Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is a part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to ‘help make whole’ those with whom they come in contact” (p. 13). Greenleaf (1991) explained that in life, people are constantly searching to make their lives more complete, more “whole.” although wholeness cannot be achieved completely, a servant-leader strives to achieve wholeness with those he/she serves. Leaders with healing qualities can tolerate and help followers in the journey of growth towards perfection. St. Benedict advising abbots about judgment of their followers, counseled that when they “. . . must pass judgment on a situation . . . , the healing balm of compassion should be applied with hope that mercy will bring about its medicinal and salutary effect” (as cited in Polan, 2004, p. 93).

Sturnick (1998) observed that “. . . healing insight helps us to confront issues – exacerbated by personal and institutional transitions – of obsessive perfectionism and abhorrence of failure” (p. 191). Where students are still young and in their formative years, a principal’s healing qualities are crucial in helping them through imperfections and failures.

Healing entails allowing followers to vent their frustrations and disappointments, especially, during resolution processes (Covey, 2002). According to Spears (1995), such processes employed in times of problem solving require the servant-leader’s use of “grief work,” that means working through the resentment and fear process with people. Parents, students, and staff occasionally face disappointing moments and conflicts that

need careful resolution so as to keep their morale high. The way a leader resolves conflicts and minimizes stress enhances a community's ability to trust and build teamwork (Harvey & Drolet, 1994). Seeking to understand followers without prejudgment is an important means of conflict resolution.

Bolman and Deal (2001) maintained that healing the soul is important if we are to arrive at the inner peace we aspire for. They argued that:

What's really missing is souls and spirit. Some people experience this gap as a haunting sense that somewhere along the line they got off track. They're working harder than ever, but they're not sure why, and they've lost touch with what's really important in life. For others, life feels like a forced march. They can never get off the treadmill, even though they don't know where they're going. . . . All these experiences are clues, symptoms of spiritual malaise – a hollow, existential vacuum that can be filled only by a greater attention to souls, spirit, and faith. (pp. 5-6)

In order to cure the spiritual malaise of followers, the servant-leader who has developed an admirable appreciation for the emotional spirit of others has a role when something traumatic happens in the life of constituents (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2007). Such a leader helps the healing process, and is approached in the event of emotional crisis.

Awareness

Greenleaf (1991) defined awareness as “. . . opening wide the doors of perception to enable one get more of what is available of sensory experience and other signals from the environment than people usually take in” (p. 18). Awareness allows a leader to obtain an intuitive insight into the future of constituents. Freud's (1965) image of consciousness as an iceberg where nine-tenths of what we know lies below the waterline in the realm of the subconscious had a special appeal for Greenleaf (1977) who claimed that, we need to bring our hidden valuable resources above the waterline into conscious awareness so they can be useful. According to Frick (2004), “Heightened awareness is

not the same as intuition but is important for the intuitive leap” (p. 145) that directs the servant-leader to gain the confidence of his/her followers. General awareness and especially self awareness strengthen the servant-leader, and serve as assets in understanding of issues that involve ethics and values, and provide a more integrated, holistic approach to most situations (Spears, 2004). Awareness is not devoid of difficult challenges. Greenleaf (1995) observed:

Awareness is not a giver of solace - it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity. (p. 20)

According to Greenleaf, awareness helps the leader to acknowledge challenges and problems and to seek possible solutions through a sympathetic disposition that makes followers feel valued.

Within the school context, the most important role of a servant-leader is to serve the values and ideals that will shape a school community, because of a deep awareness of the students’ and community needs. Leaders may observe their surroundings but miss opportunities by not looking deeply or widely enough to perceive the situation as a whole. They may troubleshoot problems, but fail in their complete resolution because of inadequate investigation. However, those with too broad a perception may have difficulty managing a situation, especially when they need to view themselves as part of it (Greenleaf, 1991). Awareness builds and clarifies value because it equips the leader to face the hassle of life with calmness when faced with stress and uncertainty (Greenleaf, 1995). In short, awareness creates a spirit of persuasion in the servant-leader, without use of coercion in administration.

Persuasion.

Spears and Lawrence (2004) pointed out that by persuasion, “. . . the servant-leader seeks to convince others rather than to coerce compliance” (p. 14). Greenleaf (1991) used the term *persuasion* to differentiate leadership that relies on positional authority and coercion from leadership that operates through influence, example, and moral power. He believed that, “Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion” (p. 22). Greenleaf (1980) identified three modes of wielding power: coercion, manipulation, and persuasion. The first two of these are means to lead people to a predetermined direction. In contrast, the third is:

The critical skill of servant-leadership. Such a leader is one who ventures and takes the risks of going out ahead to show the way and whom others follow, voluntarily, because they are persuaded that the leader’s path is the right one – for them, probably better than they could devise for themselves. (p. 44)

Persuasion unites people, creates opportunities for followers (Spears, 1995), and fosters development of mature consciences (*Congregation*, 1988). Servant-leaders lead by example and not by controlling others. They share their wisdom and seek to encourage understanding because persuasion is ethical use of power (Lopez, 1995). Servant-leaders use consensus building within groups and eschew coercion which is only effective as long as the power behind it lasts (Crom, 1998).

Steers and Black (1994) noted, “Transformational or charismatic leaders inspire their followers to pursue the leader’s clear vision for the company” (p. 420). Persuasion is a wise use of power as it can build autonomy and influence others by promoting credibility and building trust. Murrow (as cited in Kouzes & Posner, 1987) said, “To be persuasive we must be believable: to be believable we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful” (p. 15).

Conceptualization

Spears (1998) explained conceptualization as the capacity to dream great dreams, and to look at a problem (or organization) by conceptualizing it, which requires thinking further than day-to-day realities. This implies that the servant-leader, while living in the present must function as a historian able to distill and learn from past mistakes and as a prophet capable of leading his/her followers on the right path (Greenleaf, 1995).

Greenleaf (1980) cited teachers as excellent examples of servant-leaders since they are great believers in the ability to conceptualize, and believe that what they teach affects their students' future success. He saw teachers as constantly serving the needs of students and giving hope to those without hope, so that they can try and make the world a better place.

Foresight

Foresight is the ability to look into the future, and is closely related to conceptualization (Greenleaf, 1991). Bolman and Deal's (1995) dramatic description of foresight is: "Without roots, plants perish. Without history, the present makes no sense, without a historical base a vision is rootless and doomed" (p. 145). Foresight permits the servant-leader to comprehend the lessons of the past, the realities of the present and the probable consequences of a decision (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). For Greenleaf (2002), "Foresight is the 'lead' that the leader has. Once leaders lose this lead and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only" (p. 54). When leaders fail to foresee the future for the people and the organization, they 'seal our fate' as a society. In fact, change is only possible through foresight.

When misunderstanding exists regarding change, the leader with foresight must remember that painless change is an oxymoron (Reeves, 2002). Reeves pointed out that, “Effective leaders know that their task is not to render a difficult task simple, but rather to render successful accomplishment of a difficult task more rewarding than avoidance of the task” (p. 25). For Spears (2004), foresight remains a mostly unexplored area in leadership studies and thus deserves careful consideration in the life of the leader as leaders need vision in order to keep their organizations on course.

Stewardship

Block (1993) defined stewardship as “. . . the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control of those around us. Stated simply, it is accountability without control or compliance” (p. 6). This implies choosing service to our customers, our work colleagues, our community, and the world at large, as well as broad vision of the world and of our responsibility to make it a better place for all.

Greenleaf (1977) posed the following questions: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 13). For Spears (1998), stewardship “. . . assumed first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. [Stewardship] also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control” (p. 5). Block (1993) advocated for a paradigm shift in leadership toward stewardship based on service. Stewardship of this kind involves honesty and accountability; it is not an entitlement (DePree, 1997). Degraaf, Tilley, and Neal (2004) argued that in today’s world, stewardship is often associated with environmental or financial responsibility, but it can

be much more if we are willing to be accountable for something larger than just ourselves.

Leaders and followers are generally stewards or agents of the organizations they lead and are thus required to use their unique talents, skills, abilities, and gifts for the general good (Gaston, 1987). Greenleaf (1977) suggested that for servant-leaders to be effective, they need to look within themselves and effect changes that make them more effective. Stewardship means the growth and development of followers and also of the leader (Blanchard, 2002) as an asset to community building.

Building Community

Mcmanus' (2006) observations on community building are excellent for Catholic high school principals who derive their values of leadership largely from religious beliefs. Mcmanus observed, "When we belong to God, we belong to each other. . . . without genuine belonging, without the power of authentic community, no one should believe that we have come to know God" (p. 16). According to Autry (2001), human beings have an innate desire to make their workplaces habitable for the human spirit, thereby making work itself meaningful in people's lives. For Bolman and Deal (1995), "Effective leadership is a relationship rooted in community. Successful servant-leaders embody their group's most precious values and beliefs. Their ability to lead emerges from the strength and sustenance of those around them" (p. 56).

In building community, a servant-leader accepts and recognizes the uniqueness of the spirit, assumes good intentions, but does not condone inappropriate behaviors and/or mediocre performance (Spears, 2002). Bolman and Deal (2001) pointed out that leadership is a relationship rooted in community due to the leader's embodiment of the

group's most precious values and beliefs. Hence, the servant-leader creates opportunities and alternatives from which constituents may choose and thus build up their autonomy for success (Greenleaf, 1977).

Success in leadership is similar to success in life and may be measured by how well people work and play together (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Working and playing together fills in for much that has been lost in recent human history because of the shift from local communities to large institutions as primary shaper of human lives (Spears, 2004). According to Spears, "This awareness causes the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution" (p. 16). In this way, a sense of community and team spirit is created which builds and maintains the social support we need to flourish as communities (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). To this end, a servant-leader believes that a community is greater than the sum of its individual parts (Covey, 2004). Greenleaf advised, ". . . to build a community, genuine care must be exercised because human service that requires love cannot be satisfactorily dispensed by specialized institutions that exist apart from community" (p. 38). With regard to schools, Sergiovanni (1994) stated, "Community building must become the heart of any school improvement effort" (p. xi). The building of community in Catholic schools as an essential role of their participation in the community life of the Church was stressed by the Vatican II document *Gravissimum educationis* (1965) in which Catholic schools are viewed not merely as institutions but as essentially communities of people.

Any conflict during building a community must be considered to be healthy and be welcomed. When conflict arises, leaders have to learn to thrive on the tensions between their own calling and the voice of the people, because conflict situations are

critical moments where leaders can learn to practice empathy (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Even during conflict, the servant-leader is to foster mutual respect and build a team where strength is made productive and weakness made irrelevant (Covey, 1991). Greenleaf (1977) taught that what is needed to build community is for enough servant-leaders to show the way.

Commitment to the Growth of People.

Spears (2004) argued, “Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As a result, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within the institution” (p. 15). However, according to Autry (2001), “Regardless of structure, of environment, or of leadership style, our organizations remain fundamentally human organizations, which means they will reflect both the strengths and the frailties of the human condition” (p. 100). Similarly, for Covey (1991), “To affirm a person’s worth or potential, you have to look at him with an eye of faith and treat him in terms of his potential, not his behavior” (p. 59). For Covey, believing in the unseen potential creates a climate for growth and opportunity, which depends on the servant-leader’s ability, emotional, psychological, and spiritual stamina to face the perplexing challenges of the human condition.

Spears (1998) counseled and observed that, despite the weaknesses of followers, servant-leaders “. . . hold the vision of other people’s goodness for them until they discover it. This should sound familiar. We always knew that great teachers were those who saw more in us than we saw in our young selves” (p. 357). The secret to building people, Greenleaf (1995) maintained, is “. . . to be able to weld a team of such people by

lifting them up to grow taller than they would otherwise be” (p. 21). Bethel (1995)

believed followers are encouraged by:

The pleasure of an honest compliment, the excitement of taking a risk, the feelings of self-fulfillment, self esteem, and true team spirit, the electrifying sense of being part of something greater than themselves. Most of all, they want someone to be aware of what they are accomplishing, to really notice and really care. (p. 145)

The soul needs affiliation and connection with others that cannot be met by monetary benefits, but can be met by acknowledgement (Levin & Regime, 2000). While they may need encouragement, people appreciate positive affirmation, appreciation, acknowledgment, and praise that recognizes them for who they are and what they do (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

An important task for a dedicated educator is to bring hope and a future to children. Greenleaf (1977) challenged others to “. . . raise the spirit of young people, help them build their confidence that they can successfully contend with the condition, work with them to find the direction they need to go and the competencies they need to acquire, and send them on their way” (p. 172). He added that everyone working with youth, people in the community, or employees, “. . . add something that is voluntary, something that raises the human spirit. Try it and see if you are not rewarded. See if the urge to venture further does not overtake you” (p. 172).

The available literature presents many servant-leadership characteristics that build both the leader and the constituents. For the purposes of this study however, all these characteristics were considered to be subsumed under the ten characteristics above-described, which thrive on the dimensions of vision, credibility, trust, and service identified by Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999).

Dimensions of Servant-Leadership

Farling et al. (1999) and Walker and Scharf (2001) viewed vision, credibility, trust, and service as attributes that lead to higher levels of accomplishment and maturation without which other characteristics crumble. Farling et al. presented a dyadic leadership model that uses a corkscrew design (Figure 2.2). In this model, servant-leadership commences from the leader's principles, values, and beliefs, and develops through the upward-spiraling maturation process towards higher levels of attainment (Walker & Scharf) as depicted in Figure 2. 2. Walker and Scharf explained that, "While some models of leadership take behaviour and outcomes as the starting point, this model follows the view that servant-leadership emerges from the leader's motivations, mental models, passions, values, beliefs and professional convictions" (p. 40) According to Farling et al., and Walker and Scharf, servant-leaders derive their values from spiritual base through gradual progression along the four spiraling dimensions which propel them to increasing effectiveness.

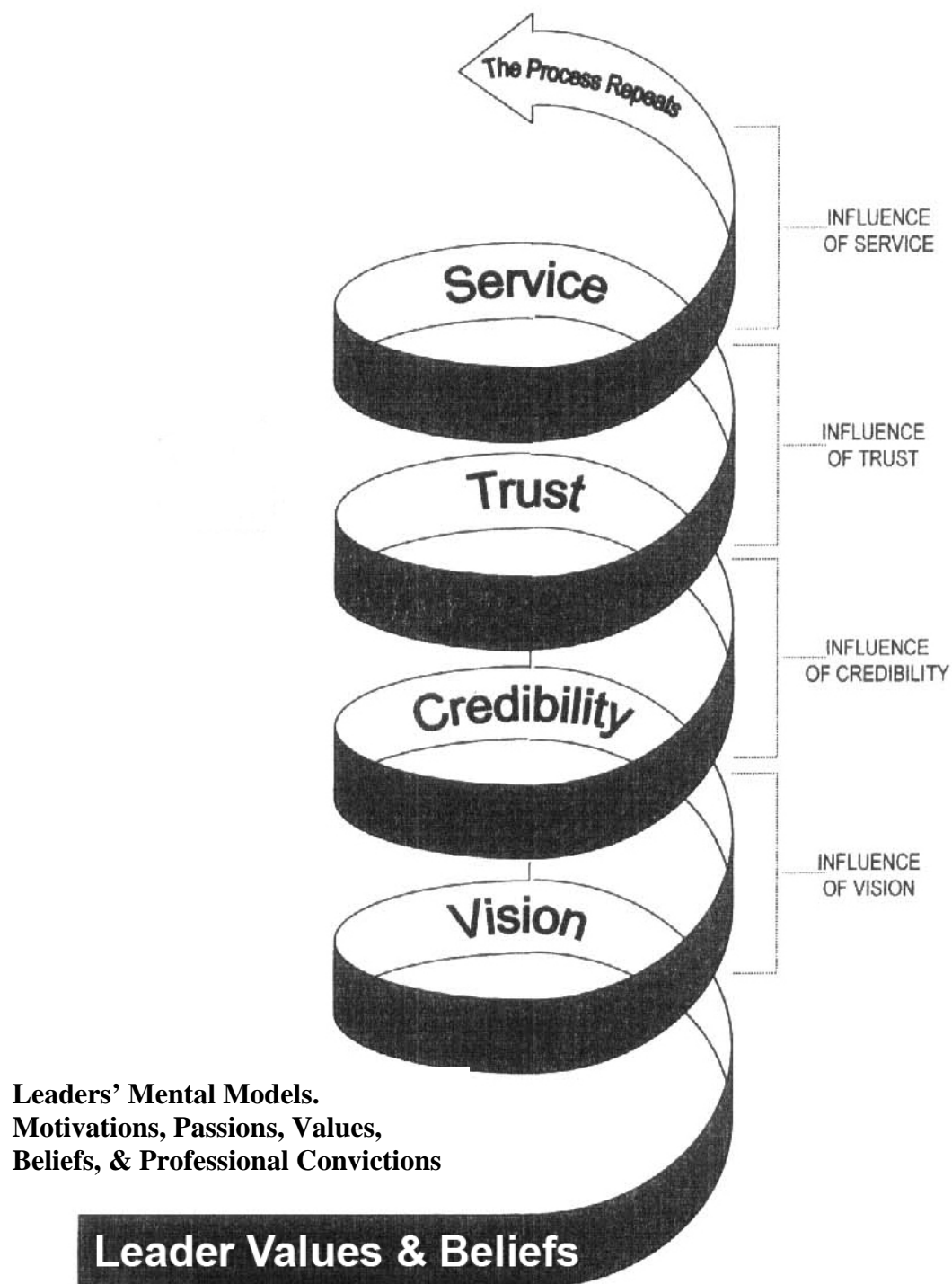


Figure 2.2. Dimensions of servant-leadership.
(Farling et al., 1999, p. 65).

Vision

Many authors have mentioned the importance of vision for motivation of constituents and for inspiration of others to action, for example Kouzes and Posner (2002), and Bennis (1997). For Blanchard (2000), vision was “. . . a picture of the future that produces passion” (p. 5), implying that the leader has an idea of what the organization will look like in the future (Day, 2003). For Day, the leader’s vision most often is regarded as an organizational vision or a vision of the organization’s future destination. Vision is important when choosing a direction to follow. Bennis and Nanus (1985) argued that a leader needs to develop a mental picture of a possible and desirable future state of the organization. This *vision*, may be as unclear as a dream or as specific as a goal or mission statement. Kotter (1990) maintained that one of the essential ways leadership differs from management is especially that leaders establish a vision for the future.

According to Wallace (2000), Catholic school principals are expected to be visionaries because it is vision that opens doors to holistic education. Greenleaf (1977) used foresight and conceptualization to describe vision. He pointed out that the servant-leader “needs to have a sense for the unknowable and be able to foresee the unforeseeable” (pp. 21-22). Kouzes and Posner (1995) indicated that vision is an ideal and unique picture of the future that the efforts of the servant-leader endeavour to attain to give meaning and purpose to the community members.

In Proverbs, 29:18, we find, “Where there is no vision the people perish”. The importance of leaders’ role is stressed by Gardner (1990) as follows: “One function that cannot be delegated is the envisioning of goals. Unless the leader has a sense of where

the whole enterprise is going and must go it is not possible to delegate” (p. 21). Servant-leaders must share their vision with their constituents if they are to rally them toward that vision. Hence, the leader’s central role of establishing a strategic vision for the organization (Batten, 1998; Bennis & Nanus, 1997; Block, 1987; Faiholm, 1997; De Pree, 1997; Melrose, 1995).

A good vision that is not down to earth, and easy to understand, and achievable does not appeal or motivate anyone to action (Block, 1987). The leader has to animate the vision and make its purpose manifest so that others can see it, hear it, taste it, feel it, for according to Kouzes and Posner (1989), “In making the intangible vision tangible, you have a kindling effect on people. You ignite human flames of passion” (p. 118). Bennis, (1997) indicated that a vision must be compelling, inspiring, and empowering, and Miller (1995) stated, a good vision unites organizational members and inspires greatness. Blanchard (1996) observed that even though people cherish freedom and democracy, they need something worthwhile to stand for, because “When people talk about effectiveness they are basically talking about vision and direction” (p. 82).

A vision for the future helps facilitate organizational change and transformation (Miller, 1995). Sergiovanni (2005) viewed vision as such a crucial element for change because it greatly influences the process of transformation in the servant-leader and in teachers, parents, and students and the school community as a whole. A good vision is meaningful if it is credible and can propel constituents to embrace it.

Credibility

According to Kouzes and Posner (1993), credibility is “. . . how leaders earn the trust and confidence of their constituents” (p. xvii). Kouzes and Posner (2003a) argued

that credibility is the bedrock on which inspiring visions are built and which provides security to constituents so as to enable them to let go of their reservations and to discharge large amounts of personal energy to the shared vision (Kouzes & Posner, 2003b). Delhousaye and Brewer (2004) asked: “If the basic substance of leadership is influencing people, how much will people permit themselves to be influenced? The answer lies in the degree of credibility a leader has” (p. 59) since leaders need to obtain from people the right to exercise influence over them.

Credible leaders have the habits, values, traits, and competence to bring about trust and commitment in those they direct (Ulrich, 1996). They also arouse hope and courage by practically living out their beliefs through facilitating positive images and thoughts, and through supporting others and seeking support for themselves (Greenleaf, 1997). By demonstrating that they keep abreast of knowledge on the technical aspects of their fields, they enhance their credibility among colleagues (Yukl, 1998) because as Behr (1998) maintained, credibility is built and earned over time. It is not merited, but earned (Farling et al., 1999). Kouzes and Posner (1989) proffered the following advice:

Credibility is one of the hardest attributes to earn. And it is the most fragile of human qualities. It is earned minute by minute, hour by hour, month by month, year by year. But it can be lost in very short order if not attended to. We are willing to forgive a few minor transgressions, a slip of the tongue, a misspoken word, a careless act. But there comes a time when enough is enough, and when leaders have used up all their credibility, they will find that it is nearly impossible to earn it back. (pp. 24-25)

Competence, trustworthiness, and dynamism are significant elements of credibility (Hackman & Johnson, 1996). Credibility inspires confidence in followers and builds stronger relationships between leaders and their followers. According to Dalhousaye and

Brewer (2004), it is founded on the feeling followers experience towards the leader on the basis of how the leader treats them. For Dalhousaye and Brewer:

You don't love someone because of who they are; you love them because of the way they make you feel.... [We] contend, however, that all things being equal, we will work harder and more effectively for people we like. And we like them in direct proportion to how they make us feel. (p. 59)

Similarly, Walker and Scharf (2001) suggested that servant-leaders demonstrate credibility when they act courageously, keep promises and exhibit themselves as persons of integrity. Credible leaders explore and listen to the dreams and aspirations of their constituents, which in turn strengthens their credibility (Kouzes and Posner, 2003a). In the school, where young minds are being formed, the principal cannot take his/her credibility for granted but must earn it for meaningful interaction with the hopes and future of the school community. Where credibility exists, it provides a fertile ground for trust to develop (Tschannen-Moran, 2004).

Trust

Tschannen-Moran (2004) defined trust as “. . . one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable and competent” (p. 17), while Bennis and Nanus (1985) described trust as “. . . the emotional glue that binds leaders and followers together” (p. 153). Trust is significant for creating interdependence that exists between leaders and their constituents (Farling et al.1999). Greenleaf (1977) viewed the function of trust in servant-leadership as the root of servant-leadership and decision making, and stressed that trust is engendered as followers gain confidence in the values, competence, and determined spirit of the leader. In fact, trust is the variable by which many leaders are judged and followed (Kouzes & Posner, 2003b).

For Evans (1998) trust is the essential link, to people's job functions and loyalty, and is vital to fellowship. Matusak (1997) advised:

Trust is fragile, it is extremely important to maintain, extremely easy to lose, and very, very hard to win back. Trust is the glue that binds team members together. Trust is the ingredient that serves as the basis for a leader's legitimacy. Trust cannot be bought or sold; it must be earned. (p. 91)

Kouzes and Posner (1987) considered trust to be so important that they pointed out, trust makes work easier, because it forms the foundation for greater openness between both individuals, their leader, and their workplace.

According to Bennis (1989), establishing trust is essential for servant- leadership, but, like credibility, trust relationships between leaders and their constituents develop gradually through personal interactions. Showing concern and openness to followers, and putting their needs and self-interest as priorities indicates care that elicits trust (Greenleaf, 1977). Kouzes and Posner (2003b) argued that leadership concern for followers contributes to follower concern and the level of trust that followers will repose in leaders. Martin's (1998) statement that "Trust is the root of all leadership" (p. 41), has important implications for the school principal, as the era in which parents simply trusted school authorities without questioning is gone forever. A school leader has to earn trust (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). Tschannen-Moran stated, "Without trust, it is unlikely that schools can be successful in their efforts to improve" (p. xii). Harris (2003) indicated that when trust exists in a school, there is no fear of shared leadership. The leader shares leadership and authority with others and helps them to use authority in using structure to empower others.

Shaw (1997) counseled leaders to be respectful towards constituents, spend time with them, encourage them in their daily work and struggles, and share information and

resources with colleagues. And, to build trust, leaders need to demonstrate honesty and integrity. Matusak (1997) argued, “Shaping a culture in which group members can trust each other enough to work together toward a common goal is one of the most important leadership tasks” (p. 94), because trust creates the environment in which each individual can become fully engaged in the shared vision, and in the part each must play to make it happen. Thus, collaborative leadership becomes possible when trust exists in a school community. The existence of trust in the school environment paves the way for the leader to serve the school community.

Service

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (2002) defined service as the act of meeting the needs of others. This definition reflects Greenleaf’s (1991) central thesis that the notion of servant-leadership is service to others (Spears, 2004). Inspired by Greenleaf, Bradley (1999) concluded, “Service is the reason for leadership” (p. 49). For Greenleaf, when people care and serve one another, they establish a firm foundation for a good society. Unfortunately, much of what takes place in modern society happens through large institutions rather than through person to person contact such that care and concern for the individual are overshadowed by institutional concerns (Greenleaf). Greenleaf (as cited in Spears, 1995) argued:

If a better society is to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant of existing major institutions by regenerative forces operating within them. (p. 40)

He also reminded aspiring servant-leaders to ask whom and how they can help so as to visualize ways of serving by leading. According to Nair (1994), there is a strong connection between service and leadership, because service is an important component of

leadership, as leaders have acknowledged and practiced it over the centuries. For example, ancient monarchs acknowledged that they were in the service of their nations and people, and it was that that led them to seek and work for the welfare of their subjects. Nair described Mahatma Gandhi as a leader who set higher standards of leadership centered on an enduring spirit of personal service. According to Nair, Gandhi is an acknowledged servant-leader known for his insistence that service must be at the core of leadership. Similarly, true greatness, true leadership, is attained not by reducing people to one's service but by giving oneself in selfless service to them (Wilkes, 1998). This, however, entails costs. The true spiritual leader is concerned infinitely more with the service to be rendered to God and to his fellow human beings than with the benefits and pleasures to be extracted from life, and in this way, to put more into life than is taken out of it.

For great accomplishments, Fairholm (1997) advised the leader in a service role to set about providing the resources that others need for success. To this end, Block (1993) advised, "Ultimately the choice we make is between service and self-interest" (p. 9), implying that choice of service over self interest shows that the leader's motivation is not based on selfish needs and material desires (Farling et al., 1999). An authentic *customer focus* demands leadership with service to others, a concern or an orientation to other people that gives pride of place to their well-being (Snyder, Dowd, & Houghton, 1994). Block lamented, ". . . it seems the choice for service is rarely made" (p. 15). However, the fundamental motivation for leadership should be a desire to serve (Greenleaf, 1977; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Batten, 1998; Block, 1993; Winston, 1999).

Murray (1997) viewed leadership as one of the highest forms of service that is best exercised when it freely inspires others to a decision that is really their own, and one they would not have arrived at without the leader's benevolent influence. Understanding that leaders do not command and control, servant-leaders serve and support (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Several authors (Mulligan, 2005; Furman, 2002; Walker & Scharf, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2000) have noted the increasing recognition in educational communities that service and servanthood are of paramount importance. Servant-leadership is the leadership style needed in today's schools (Crippen, 2006). Although Crippen and Sergiovanni (1993) prescribed servant-leadership as the leadership style which could effectively meet the needs of the changing landscape in contemporary schools, others like Lad and Luechauer (1998), Autry (2001), and Fryer (2001) emphasized that servant-leadership presents various challenges.

Challenges and Tensions of Servant-Leadership

Servant-leadership is not an easy choice for success in leadership, nor is it a panacea for all the difficulties of leadership. Besides, the servant-leadership option is fraught with frustrations, hostility, and periods of passivity (Lad & Luechauer, 1998; Autry, 2001; Fryer, 2001). For Lad and Luechauer, "The journey toward becoming a leader who seeks to serve rather than be served is worthy, commendable, and, unfortunately filled with many personal, organizational, and environmental barriers, paradoxes, and downsides" (p. 61). The barriers, paradoxes, and downsides could lead to abandonment of the servant-leadership ideal when the leader lacking faith fails to see beyond the immediate challenges (Wheatley, 2004).

Barriers to the Practice of Servant-Leadership

According to Lad and Luechauer (1998) barriers that may offer resistance to the practice of servant-leadership are:

1. Followers might initially consider servant-leadership to be another *management fad*. Such skepticism arises from the inherent mistrust generated by the times when leaders have not remained faithful to the psychological contracts made with employees who seriously yearn for real change (Reeves, 2002).
2. Leaders and followers may not see servant-leadership as a pressing need, so that leaders remain trapped in a whirlwind of other events and needs that demand urgent attention.
3. Leaders and organizations spend much time and energy on recommending servant-leadership and its many advantages but excuse themselves from practicing it because they see it as not being practicable in their particular organization. Besides, followers may be caught in system relationships that have developed and seem impossible to break (Reeves).

Walker and Sackney (2007) added egoism as a barrier to healthy school leadership. For Lad and Luechauer and Autry (2001), such barriers may actually provide opportunities in disguise as they encourage the leader to assess his/her and the organization's stance with regard to servant-leadership. According to Lad and Luechauer, "Barriers are good news for those who are willing to see the blessing in the storm clouds" (p. 63).

Paradoxes Inherent in the Principles of Servant-Leadership

Servant-leadership presents two paradoxes:

The first emanates from the fact that servant-leadership may take varying and ever changing forms. The leader must be comfortable with such variation in the process and realize the commandment that 'thou is not the only servant in the organization' (Lad & Luechauer, 1998). Such a realization helps the leader to appreciate the contribution of others to the organization. Without the acknowledgement of other servant-leaders in the organization, servant-leadership can be self defeating. The second flows from the mistaken notion by some followers that servant-leadership implies the absence of rules, hierarchy, or structure, rather than understanding the changes required in the role that rules, hierarchy, and structure perform (Blanchard, 1998).

Inhibitors of the Practice of Servant-Leadership

Apart from barriers and paradoxes, servant-leadership has its downsides that the leader must be prepared to experience (Lad & Luechauer, 1998). Some of the downsides include:

1. The reluctance of some colleagues and followers to collaborate and be empowered.
2. The difficulty of sharing control, of being humble, and capable of uplifting others, and of knowing very well that colleagues may surpass the servant-leader within the organization.
3. The challenges of dealing with anger, frustration, vulnerability, and despondence as the servant-leader strives to be a role model.

These, Lad and Luechauer noted, may delay or prevent the process of becoming a servant-leader. But the leader must recognize that these barriers, paradoxes, and downsides are not only perceived but also justifiable. The leader can enhance the

possibility of a safe and successful journey into servant-leadership by preparing for such anticipated difficulties early during the leadership mandate. Facing such challenges, the servant-leader should remember that *actions speak louder than words* and that it is not talking about servant-leadership that does the trick, but practicing servant-leadership style (Lad & Luechauer).

Strategies for Practicing Servant-Leadership

Lad and Luechauer (1998) indicated four ways towards enhancing the practice of servant-leadership:

1. Engagement in dialogue, discussion, education and training, since many of the barriers issue from misconceptions and unrealistic tales about its meaning and practice.
2. Joining or creating the appropriate study groups so as to receive new ideas and encouragement from other servant-leaders.
3. Attendance at Servant-Leadership Conference in order to learn from other participants' experiences.
4. Engaging in activities such as decorating one's office with reminders of servant-leadership such as posters, calendars, pictures, daily prayer/meditation/reflection, and maintaining a servant-leadership journal.

For the Catholic school principal, the words of scripture are a source of inspiration and hope in the practice of servant-leadership. A line from Paul's letter to the Romans is a good foundation for hope:

Indeed everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope, from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God. (Rom, 15: 4)

Tenacity, perseverance, strength, and hope are the servant-leader's way to success (Blanchard, 1996).

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework was inspired by Farling et al.'s (1999) four dimensions of servant-leadership, that is: vision, credibility, trust, and service, as the key propelling attributes of all characteristics of servant-leadership. In this framework (Figure 2.3), the dimensions find their roots in the leader's principles, values, and beliefs, and grow through the leader's vision, credibility, trust, and service. Service is the focus of the leader's activities (Spears, 2004), because service to followers is the reason for the servant-leader to lead. Service is the *raison d'être* for servant-leadership (Covey, 2004).

Farling et al. (1999) explained that vision, credibility, and trust, lead to service, and the process becomes repeated as represented by the inverse and continual flow of the arrows in the diagram. The arrows represent an endless journey, because servant-leadership is a process that revitalizes and rejuvenates itself over and over again (Walker & Scharf, 2001), and it is by serving the members of the community that all the characteristics and attributes are strengthened and lead back to service.

Another component of the conceptual framework is the ten characteristics Greenleaf (1970) identified as the essential day-to-day qualities of servant-leadership.

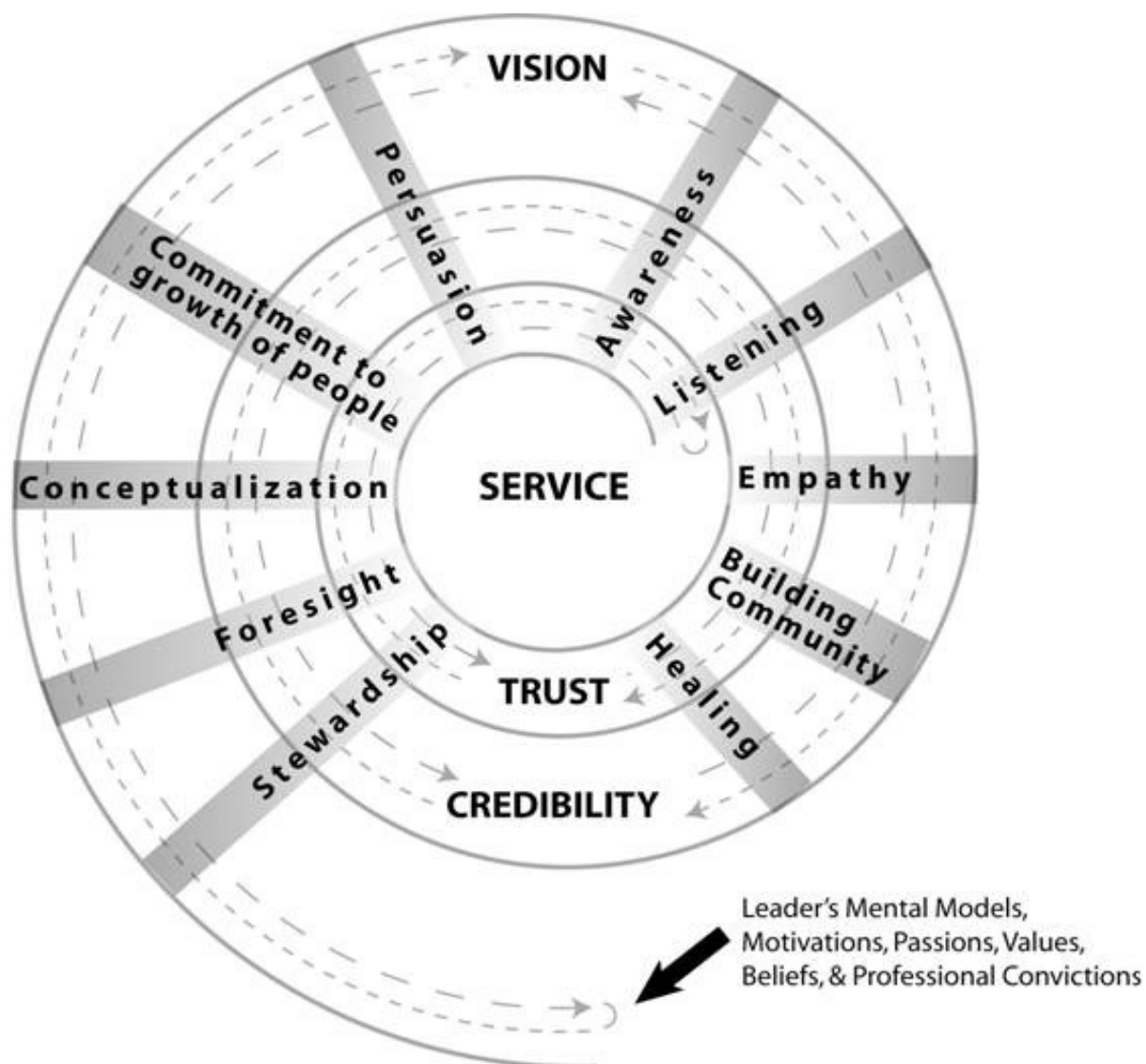


Figure 2.3. Conceptual framework: Attributes and characteristics of servant-leadership leading to effective school community building.

Adapted from: Greenleaf, 1970; Farling et al., 1999; DeGraaf, Tilley and Neal, 2004.

These qualities are listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

The spiral form of the diagram represents the capacity of the school community to expand and grow as the servant-leadership characteristics are served. However, the ten characteristics must not be viewed as a ladder or a cyclical process where they build upon each other or lead one into the other (DeGraaf, Tilley & Neal, 2004). According to DeGraaf, Tilley and Neal (2004), “It is more appropriate to view these characteristics as a weaving, with each strand supporting and shaping the others” (p. 162). All the characteristics are to be understood as helping to regenerate each other and lead to building of a strong school community.

Summary of Chapter Two

The literature concerning the context the principalship in Saskatchewan was reviewed. The relevance of servant-leadership in Catholic schools, and the historical beginnings of servant-leadership was discussed. Biblical references were made to the scriptural basis of servant-leadership since Catholic principals need to provide leadership based on the scriptures. As well, the model of servant-leadership presented by various authors, the differences between transactional, transformational, and servant-leadership, were presented. In addition, the characteristics and dimensions of servant-leadership, were explored. The barriers, paradoxes, and downsides of servant-leadership, and the strategies for practicing servant-leadership, and the framework for my study were also discussed.

This literature review expressed the view that servant-leadership is not only a safe way for effective leadership, but it contains the necessary tools needed to build a healthy

Catholic high school learning community. As a result of rapid societal changes, there is a need for ethical and efficient leadership that serves others, invests in their development, and fulfills a shared vision (Page & Wong, 2007).

Several authors have indicated that values, morals, and ethics are at the centre of leadership without necessarily implying a religious conception of moral and spiritual leadership, even though they use religious language. This clamor for ethical and moral leadership in secular organizations reinforces Ciriello's (1996) observation that, "Moral and ethical formation are central to the purpose of Catholic schools" (p. 3). Arthur (1998) concurred when he said, "... for a Catholic school the values underpinning its leadership would indeed largely be derived from religious beliefs" (p. 50), and servant-leadership provides that kind of leadership. Thus, Mulligan (2005) reminded Catholic school leaders, "Catholic education offers students meaning and a coherent world view: one large reason to hope, and a most urgent reason for leaders in Catholic education to be agents of hope" (p. 204).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I present the research design for the study of the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. This chapter is composed of seven major topics: philosophical orientation to the study, the research design, participant selection, data collection methods, data analysis, presentation of findings, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations for the research.

Qualitative case study design, utilizing the constructivist paradigm was employed in the study, because qualitative case study has the advantage of providing an opportunity for arriving at great learning from the participant perspective (Stake, 2005). A further advantage of qualitative case study is that it allows an inquiry to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events (Yin, 2003). Miles and Huberman (1994) wrote that qualitative studies are usually associated with certain strengths:

1. They focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, and therefore provide a good handle on real life situations.
2. They are rich, holistic and have a strong potential for unveiling complexity.

Qualitative data provide vivid “thick descriptions” taken from real contexts, and reveal truths that have strong impact on the reader.

3. They have been suggested as the best strategy for discovery, investigating new areas, and for hypothesis development.

It must be underlined, however, that qualitative studies exhibit the above mentioned strengths better if the researcher chooses an appropriate philosophical orientation that serves as the basis of the exploration of the research in view. In this study for example, the constructivist/ interpretive qualitative paradigm was chosen as the philosophical stance that provided the lens through which respondents' understandings were unveiled. The next section is devoted to the philosophical orientation of this study.

Philosophical Orientation to the Study

The purpose of this research is to explore the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. Hatch (2002) identified four paradigms in qualitative research. One of the paradigms is the constructivist/interpretivist frame which views reality as multiple, and humanly constructed. Depending on the purpose of the research, a researcher chooses one or a combination of the qualitative research paradigms for his/her research.

From the ontological and epistemological viewpoints, this study lends itself to a constructivist/interpretive inquiry, because, first, the reality sought was based on the understanding and meanings participants made of the events, situations, and actions of their daily professional leadership experiences (Stake, 2005). And, second, meaning was constructed by interaction with the participants of the study (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) maintained that researchers use the constructivist qualitative approach because "They are interested in how people make sense of their

lives. In other words, they are concerned with what are called *participant perspectives*” (p. 7). Meaning is of great concern to the qualitative enquirer because human participants do not live in neutral contexts; they are largely influenced by events and their surroundings. Therefore, to arrive at the meaning people make of their world, interaction with them is necessary (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The constructivist paradigm advocates interaction as the primary channel of meaning making (Ponterotto, 2005).

Constructivist Philosophy

Constructivist philosophy emphasizes the existence of varying standards of truth assertions and justification of knowledge, reflecting the belief that *knowledge* is the result of how the *knower* constructs reality from his/her experiences, interactions and perceptions (Hanley-Maxwell, Al Hano & Skivington, 2007). In other words, constructivists hold the view that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an exteriorly singular entity (Hansen, 2004). In agreement, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) wrote that the constructivist paradigm espouses a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a transactional epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology. Ponterotto (2005) explained that a distinguishing feature of the constructivist approach is the centrality of the interaction between the researcher and the object of investigation. Using an interactive researcher-participant dialogue via several interview sessions and observations, the findings of this research is a co-creation of me as the researcher and the participants.

Kant (1884) has been credited with influencing constructivist thinking in qualitative research. Kant taught that human perception originates not only from evidence

of the senses but also from the mental tools that serve to organize the received sense impression (Hamilton, 1994). Further, human assertions about nature cannot be independent of inside-the head processes of the knowing subject. Kant's writings underline a central principle of constructivist thought, that it is not possible to separate objective reality from the individual experiencing, processing, and labeling the reality (Olsen, 1996; Sciarra, 1999).

Because of its hermeneutical approach to meaning making, the constructivist paradigm argues that meaning is veiled and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection (Schwandt, 2000). According to Ponterotto (2005), reflection is stimulated by the researcher-participant dialogue via the research methods adopted by the researcher. The implications of Ponterotto's observation to this research is that it was through my reflections and interpretation of the data that profound meaning was uncovered. In addition, throughout the analysis process, I strived to understand the data from the point of view of the daily experiences of the participants (Schwandt), as the meaning the respondents brought to the research was of primary importance for me as the researcher (Schwandt, 1994).

Ponterotto (2005) explained that, the objectives of the constructivist approach are idiographic, emic, case-based position that focuses attention on the specifics of particular cases. Idiography refers to the set of social, political, moral values, attitudes, outlooks, and beliefs that both the researcher and respondent bring to the research (Schwandt (1997), while emic refers to the individual constructs or behaviours both researcher and informants bring to the research (Stake, 2005).

In sum, reality is constructed through the researcher-respondent interaction, based on the knowledge they both bring to the study. Guided by the philosophical tenets of constructivist thinking as described above, I explored the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and investigated how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives, by seeking an understanding from participant perspectives.

Because I conducted this study according to the philosophical principles of constructivist thought, the conceptual framework for the study was not used *a priori* (to be tested) construct, but rather used after participants had offered their constructions as an analytic framework with which to organize and analyze their constructions (a secondary analytic framework) following initial interpretation and analysis. Thus, participants' experiences reflected and expanded on the culminating conceptual framework, and provided deeper insights into the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005b) pointed out that the constructivist paradigm assumes a set of methodological procedures that guide the research. In the following section, I present the research design of the study.

Research Design

Schulman (1988) observed:

To assert that something has method is to claim that there is an order, a regularity, obscure though it may be, which underlies an apparent disorder, thus rendering it meaningful. Method is the attribute which distinguishes research activity from mere observation and speculation. When adversaries argue about the nature of the world or the best approach to some particular human endeavour, we typically find ourselves evaluating their perspective claims by examining the methods they use to reach their conclusions. (p. 3)

A basic conclusion issuing from Schulman's argumentation is that a carefully chosen research methodology systematically executed authenticates research. Hatch (2002) and

Creswell (1998) identified case studies as one of the qualitative research designs constructivist researchers utilize. They indicated that case studies are different from other types of qualitative studies (phenomenological studies, biographical studies, grounded theory, and ethnographical studies), because they are extensive verifications and intensive analyses and descriptions of a single unit or system bounded by space and time. Case study designs involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group, to permit the researcher to effectively understand how it operates and functions (Berg, 2001).

Stake (2000) advised, “Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 435). By this observation, Stake implied that a researcher chooses a particular research design and method because of the intent of the study. In other words, the research purpose dictates the research design and method (McMillan & Wergin, 2002). My choice of case study design was dictated by my desire to construct meaning through an in-depth study of the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals (Hatch, 2002; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Stake (1995) identified three types of case studies: *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective*. In intrinsic case studies, the researcher makes no attempt to generalize beyond the single case, or evolve theories pertaining to his/her research. With instrumental case studies, the researcher seeks to gain insight into an issue, clarify a theory, or revise aspects of a generalization. In collective case studies, a number of cases are researched in order to contribute to or clarify components of a theory. The collective case studies design usually involves several instrumental cases performed to improve researchers’ capacity to contribute to theory about a larger collection of cases (Yin, 2003). Findings

from collective case studies may substantiate a theory, while at the same time providing insights into people's thinking and behavior in a particular situation (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

I adopted the collective case study design for my research because a case study approach can provide the medium for in-depth data collection of the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), after the researcher has identified the disciplinary orientation and design for the study, he/she then identifies the participants, and the methods of data collection. The following sections discuss participant selection and the research methods of the study.

Participant Selection

In identifying participants in case studies, the researcher often engages purposive sampling (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995). Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to find out, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which most can be learned (Merriam, 1998). In other words, the researcher chooses specific cases to maximize the potential for learning from those cases (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 2005; Silverman, 2000). Based on telephone conversations with secretaries of the two Catholic school divisions from which participants were selected, I learned that both Ronald and Colorado Catholic school divisions in the province of Saskatchewan recommended the servant-leadership ideal for their administrators, and therefore, all Catholic high school principals in these school divisions were potential respondents for this study. My initial intention was to use the nominational technique in the identification and selection of participants. However, the Directors of both school divisions declined to nominate principals with the reason that

their involvement might compromise my study. Thus, I used purposive sampling (Merriam) in the selection of the female participants, as there were only two female high school principals, one each in both school divisions. I selected the four male participants by random sampling (Charles, 1998) using the list of principals provided me by participants' superintendents.

In order to gain access to participants, I requested their Directors' permission to undertake research about selected principals' servant-leadership role in their schools (see Appendix D). I then contacted principals either by e-mail, phone, or personally. The selection of the six participants for the study was based on their willingness to participate in the study.

After the interviewing process, two participants were selected for observation for up to two weeks each (see Appendix D). The criteria for the selection of the two respondents for observation was based both on the richness of data provided during the interview process, availability, time of interview completion, and accessibility measured by distance.

Data Collection Methods

Denzin and Lincoln (2005a), and Yin (2003) identified six sources of data collection for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, participant observation, direct observation, and physical artifacts. Yin noted that one of the main sources of data for case study is the interview. To achieve the purpose of this study, I employed interviewing and direct observation as the sources of data collection (Merriam, 1988).

The Notion of Interview

Webster's Canadian Dictionary and Thesaurus (2004) defined interview as, "A meeting in which a person is asked his or her views" (p. 271). Rubin and Rubin (1995) defined qualitative interviewing as a mode of finding out the feelings and thoughts of other people about their worlds. Furthermore, through qualitative interviews, researchers can understand experiences and reconstruct events in which they did not participate. Along with the desire to achieve the purpose of my research by qualitative interviewing, my choice of interviewing was inspired by the idea that "Qualitative interviewing is a great adventure; every step of an interview brings new information and opens windows into the experiences of the people you meet" (Rubin & Rubin, p. 1). In addition, qualitative interviewing is a versatile research tool that provides the advantage to enter the 'world' of the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin). In short, I was interested in the great adventure of qualitative interviewing, because I agreed with Dewey (1938) that examining the experience of other people is the key to education.

Various authors (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Stake, 1995; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) have provided lists of the different types of interviews. Fontana and Frey (2005), however, identified eight interview types: empathetic interviewing ("The capacity for participating in and understanding the feelings or ideas of another" p. 175); structured interviewing (all participants answer predetermined questions without room for probing questions); group interviewing (the researcher questions several individuals at the same time, in a formal or informal context); postmodern interviewing (minimizing, and if possible eliminating, the interviewer's influence on the respondent so as to produce richer and more meaningful data that focus on the life of the participant); gendered interviewing

(an interview process that emphasizes emancipation, aiming at minimizing status difference and the limitations of traditional hierarchical form of interviewing (Oakley, 2003); electronic interviewing (a means of information gathering where questionnaires are administered by fax, electronic mail, and websites); unstructured interviewing (flexible open-ended questioning that allows in-depth data collection); and semi-structured interviewing (the use of predetermined but flexibly worded questions that permit further probing questions). Each type of interviewing is ideally dictated and suited for specific situations (Stake, 1995). Yin (2003), and Fontana and Frey explained that most commonly, case study interviews are open-ended or semi-structured in nature where the researcher can ask interviewees opinions about events.

I employed semi-structured interviews in my research because I agree with Hancock and Algozzine (2006) and Hatch (2002) that semi-structured interviews are especially well-suited for case study research. Hancock and Algozzine explained that semi-structured interviewing involves the use of:

Predetermined but flexibly worded questions, the answers to which provide tentative answers to the researcher's questions. In addition to posing predetermined questions, researchers using semi-structured interviews ask follow-up questions designed to probe more deeply issues of interest to interviewees. In this manner, semi-structured interviews invite interviewees to express themselves openly and freely and to define the world from their own perspectives, not solely from the perspective of the researcher. (p. 40)

The advantages of semi-structured interviewing are the flexibility for the interviewer and interviewee, and the use of follow up questions to explore topics in detail. In addition, semi-structured interviewing seldom proceeds with the same questions posed to participants, as interviewees are expected to answer questions based on their unique experiences (Silverman, 2004). Semi-structured interviewing matched my research

intention and design because of the possibility of gathering in-depth data by the use of flexible questioning.

The Interview Process

Seidman (1998) advised researchers who intend gathering in-depth data from participants to avoid one-shot meetings with interviewees, as the researcher risks treading on thin “contextual ice” (p. 11). Seidman recommended a series of interviews with each interview lasting between 60-90 minutes each. According to Seidman, separate interviews spaced three days to one week apart are recommended as the intervening days allows time for the interviewee and interviewer to reflect over the preceding interview, but not enough time to lose the connection between the preceding interviews.

One of the data gathering methods was several 60 to 90 minutes’ face-to-face semi-structured interviews and telephone interview sessions spaced three days to two weeks apart. The decision to conduct telephone interviews with some participants was determined by the distance between me as the researcher and the interviewees. I began the first session by asking general semi-structured questions regarding the participant’s personal and professional experiences. The intention of the first interview with each participant was to learn the background of each participant as a preparatory ground for subsequent questions which dwelt on participant’s daily lived experiences of servant-leadership (Seidman, 1998). Creswell (1998) and Hatch (2002) suggested the development of an interview guide to help the interview process (see Appendix A). Interview guides are pre-constructed questions that are normally developed for qualitative interviewing (Creswell, 1998; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). According to Hancock and Algozzine, the interview guide identifies appropriate open-ended questions that the

researcher will ask each respondent. The questions should be designed to allow the researcher to gain insights into the research's fundamental research questions. I contacted respondents and agreed on dates, times, and venues for interviews. Data consisted of direct quotations and observation notes because, as Fontana and Frey (2005) maintained, interviews are at the same time observations.

Creswell (1998) advised researchers to determine the type of interview that is practical and useful for gathering information for answering research questions. I employed telephone interviews in gathering data from those participants who lived far from me the researcher because “a telephone interview provides the best source of information when the researcher does not have direct access to individuals” (Creswell, p. 124). However, I employed one face-to-face interview session with one of the three telephone interviewees during the second interview session with him. During the telephone interviews, I tape-recorded each interview, and made detailed notes. I found the face-to-face and telephone interviews to be equally valuable for the study as both interview types yielded equally rich and insightful data. The only difference between the two kinds of interviews was the absence of participants' mannerisms and facial expressions during the telephone interviews. The observation phase of the study followed after completion of most of the interviews.

Direct Observation

Denzin and Lincoln (2005a) observed, “Qualitative research is inherently multi-method” (p. 5) because the combination of multiple methodological practices adds rigor, breadth, richness, and depth to any inquiry. In order to increase the richness, depth, and rigor of the research, I observed each of the two selected participants for up to two weeks.

According to Merriam (1988), observation is a “research tool” (p. 87) that combines well with interviewing to give deeper insight into a research. Angrosino (2005) agreed when he wrote that conducting observations in the settings that are natural loci of activities under investigation serve to immerse the researcher deeper into the study. Hancock and Algozzine (2006) recommended observation because it is a source of information taken directly by the researcher from the research setting. They observed, “Unlike interviews, which rely on people’s sometimes biased perceptions and recollections of events, observations of the setting by a case study researcher may provide more objective information related to the research topic” (p. 46). Interview data give a secondhand account of the situation under study, while observation data is firsthand experience of the subject under study (Merriam, 1988). Marshall and Rossman (1995) wrote that observation involves the systematic noting and recording of events and behaviors in the social setting chosen for study.

I complemented the semi-structured interviewing data with direct observation, because as Merriam (1988) pointed out, by observing, the researcher “gets to see things firsthand and to use his or her own knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed, rather than relying upon once-removed accounts of interviewees” (p. 88). I structured the observations so as to be able to witness a broad view of the daily servant-leadership role of the two selected principals. I created an observation protocol that served as a guide in my recording of information during the observation (see Appendix B). The observation protocol consisted of a list of features to be addressed during the observations (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). The list included the time, date, location of observation, name, position of the person being observed, specific activities and events

related to the research questions, initial impressions, and interpretations of the activities and events under observation (Creswell, 1998; Hancock & Algozzine). In addition, I was as unobtrusive as possible during the observation period (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) recommended that researchers record observations in the shortest possible time. Thus, in course of the observation period, I made time to write short notes and comments. And, as participants were very open to discuss and explain events to me as the observations progressed, I asked them to clarify incidents that were unclear to me. After each day's observation and meeting with the respondent, I immediately left the setting in order to record, summarize, and outline my observations (Merriam, 1988).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Merriam (1988) reminded researchers that good analysis in case studies demands the researcher to search for emerging and re-emerging patterns and themes throughout the data. Donmoyer (1985) put the onus of making meaning out of data on the researcher. He observed, "Data cannot speak for themselves. For data to speak, they must be translated into a language, and languages are inventions, not discoveries" (p. 17). Hatch (2002) conceptualized general data analysis process as *asking questions of data*, because asking the right questions leads to the right interpretation of data. According to Hatch:

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organizing and interrogating data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. It involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretation, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding. It involves . . . "mindwork". (p. 148)

It can be inferred from Hatch's words that data are replete with information, and it is by systematically and carefully treating data and asking the right questions that information is discovered.

I began data analysis from the first day of data gathering while constantly remaining aware of the interconnectedness of data from the initial day of data collection until the analysis process was completed. Hatch (2002) recommended starting data analysis soon after collection has begun because, "At an informal, but essential, level, analysis is happening from the first moments of data collection" (p. 149). Analysis involves giving meaning to first impressions. It means there is not necessarily an exact moment when data analysis formally began (Stake, 1995). Stake reminded researchers of the need to be aware of the holism of case study research and the interconnectedness of all stages of the research process.

With regard to formal analysis, Stake (1995) recommended two ways of arriving at meaning in the analysis of case study data. One way is the researcher's direct interpretation of an instance that has been seen, heard, read, or described. The second way is that the researcher intuitively clusters similar instances together before developing an interpretation. Creswell (1998) and Stake described this kind of analysis as categorical aggregation which represents units of information composed of events, happenings, and instances. Categorical analysis leads to the discovery of patterns and themes, while direct interpretations demands more patience and intuition to arrive at an interpretation (Stake). Both types of analysis are useful in case studies, and I combined them in the analysis process.

After the transcription of the interviews and recording of observations, I continued the analysis process by coding the data for patterns and themes. I was guided by Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) observation that analysis involves "working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others" (p. 153). Merriam (1988) recommended that the first step is to read the material collected many times to familiarize oneself with the data and be able to hear and feel what the data has to offer. This approach leads to organizing the data topically, by arranging the material into narrative account, then systematically classifying the data into some sort of schema consisting of categories, themes, or types. I compared data from the different participants and developed codes for each theme. And, as Janesick (2000) pointed out, "the purpose of these disciplined approaches to analysis is, of course, to describe and explain the essence of the experience and meaning in participants' lives" (p. 391). I used interpretations and aggregations throughout the entire process of data collection and analysis (Stake, 1995).

Establishing Trustworthiness

According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) trustworthiness refers to the overall quality of a research. Denzin (1994) pointed out, "Trustworthiness consists of four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability" (p.508) which serve as replacements for internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity as in conventional quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness is achieved when results reflect as accurately as possible the meanings as described by the respondents (Glesne, 1999). The work of the researcher is to reduce misinterpretation of

findings, by showing the audience the procedures employed and whether they reflect the truth of what was researched (Merriam, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Denzin and Lincoln pointed out that trustworthiness does not happen naturally, it depends on the thoroughness of the data gathering, and the care the investigator exercised during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of data while ensuring that the understanding of participants has been preserved. I employed a number of strategies in this study to guarantee thoroughness: triangulation of data, the use of tape-recorders in the interviewing process, listening carefully to interviewees and making detailed field notes, member checks, reflexivity, peer debriefing, and audit trail (Creswell, 1998, 2005; Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

Credibility

Credibility parallels the traditional criteria for internal validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Guba and Lincoln (1999) explained, “Credibility is seen as a check on the isomorphism between the enquirer’s data and interpretations and the multiple realities in the minds of informants” (p. 147). It means that instead of centering attention on a presumed *real* reality “out there” attention has shifted to establishing the match between the created realities of participants and those realities as represented by the researcher and ascribed to various stakeholders (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to establish credibility, I used member checks, which implies taking interview transcripts and observational reports back to participants to ask them if the findings were plausible (Merriam, 1988; Seale, 1999). Further, I indicated and eliminated researcher biases by allowing the participants to present their lived experiences through their narrations that were tape-recorded and transcribed to ensure credibility of the data.

Creswell (1998), Merriam (2001), and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) recommended the employment of more than one research strategy or triangulation in qualitative research in order to ensure accuracy of results. In agreement, Seale (1999) observed, “Theory generated from just one kind of data never fits, or works as well as theory generated from diverse slices of data on the same category” (p. 55). Bogdan and Biklen explained, “Triangulation was first borrowed in the social sciences to convey the idea that to establish a fact you need more than one source of information” (p. 115). Triangulation came to mean that many sources of data were better in a study than a single source because multiple sources lead to a fuller understanding of the phenomena being studied (Bogdan & Biklen). Triangulation was observed by interviewing six principals from two different Catholic school divisions in different school contexts to allow a rich comparison of data. A combination of interviews and observation techniques was another avenue for triangulation.

In addition, I employed peer debriefing by engaging three university colleagues in discussion of my interview and observation processes, my findings, tentative analyses, and conclusions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). I worked with two of the debriefers on an informal basis as the inquiry process emerged, but the meetings with the third debriefer were on a regular schedule for a total of about 10 hours. Debriefing was carried out from the period of data collection (interviewing and observations) through data analyses. The purpose of engaging peer debriefing was to allow peers to pose searching questions in order to help me ascertain the accuracy and completeness of my data collection and analyses procedures and understand my own position, values, and role in the research process (Guba & Lincoln). I found peer debriefing valuable in two areas: a) it allowed me

to re-structure my observation protocol in order to better capture and record observation data, and b) it led me to a more accurate scrutiny of data for my analysis and findings.

Transferability

The second criterion for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research is *transferability*. Transferability (also called generalizability) which parallels external validity as conventionally conceived, is the extent to which results of one research are applicable to other situations, (Merriam, 1988; Seale, 1999). Leininger (1985) cautioned, “It is the researcher’s responsibility to establish whether this criterion can be met in a similar context while preserving the original findings from a study” (p. 107). I achieved transferability by providing a rich, thick, and profound description of the time, place, context, and participant responses (Guba & Lincoln, 1989), so that readers can judge the applicability of the findings, formulate their own interpretations, and make personal judgments regarding transferability to their own or other contexts (Seidman, 1998), as the study was carried out in a Catholic high school context as indicated in the limitations in Chapter One.

Dependability

The third criterion of trustworthiness is *dependability*. To replace reliability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested *dependability*. Dependability refers to the consistency of the investigative procedures employed within the changing setting of the study. According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), dependability “is concerned with the stability of the data over time” (p. 242). Lincoln and Guba (1994) explained, dependability “seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and design induced change” (p. 299). Dependability in this research was addressed through the use

of an audit trail (Merriam, 1998) by cataloguing participant data, analysis, results, interpretations, and conclusions. As well, I stated my position as the researcher, and described in detail how I collected the data (Merriam).

Confirmability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified the fourth criterion of qualitative research which paralleled the conventional criterion of objectivity as *confirmability*. Confirmability deals with the objectivity of a study in terms of its procedures, orientation, and methodology rather than the objectivity of the inquirer (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1999) explained, “Confirmability shifts emphasis from certifiability of the enquirer to the confirmability of the data” (p. 147). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) “Confirmability is concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator’s imagination” (p. 243). Leininger (1985) agreed when he said *confirmability* refers to “obtaining direct and often repeated affirmations of what the researcher has heard, seen, or experienced with respect to the phenomenon under study” (p.105). During data collection, I elicited participants’ stories in their own settings. I developed a research journal and audit trail as ways of validating my interpretation of the data to the perceptions of respondents. As well, I employed peer debriefing (Guba & Lincoln, 1999), by requesting university colleagues to review the process of study to ensure the congruence of emerging results with raw data and provisional interpretations (Merriam, 1988). Participants were given the opportunity to review and confirm the completeness and accuracy of the interview transcriptions.

Ethical Considerations

As the nature of this study demanded interaction with human subjects in the information gathering process, the necessity to consider appropriate ethical procedures could not be overlooked. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) advised researchers to consider the effects of the participation in case study research during the planning and throughout the duration of the study. Two issues dominate traditional official guidelines of ethics in studies with *human subjects*: informed consent and the protection of participants from harm (Bogdan & Biklen). These guidelines ensure that:

1. “Informants enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved.
2. Informants are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive” (Bogdan and Biklen, p. 48).

In course of the research, I adhered to the ethical principles suggested by Bogdan and Biklen because participant trust and cooperation with me as the researcher required that I was guided by and bound by the highest ethical criteria and guidelines. Otherwise, the trustworthiness and credibility of me as the researcher, and the institution which I represented, would be at stake. Merriam (1988) indicated that like other qualitative researches, case studies are emergent in design. There is, therefore, the need for extreme care and an anticipation of the potential ethical issues and sensitivity to issues as they emerged (Merriam, 1988). Bogdan and Biklen offered the following ethical guidelines for carrying out a study: (a) avoidance of sites where participants feel coerced to participate; (b) honoring respondents’ privacy; (c) detailed information to participants about time demands of the research; (d) ensuring participants’ anonymity; (e) treating

subjects with respect, and seeking their cooperation; (d) respecting terms of agreement; and (e) truth telling. In light of the above, I faithfully observed the ethical guidelines in course of the study in order to ensure the safety of participants.

This study was initially approved by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics and Behavioural Science on May 27, 2008 and re-approved on May 29, 2009. The guidelines established by this board were faithfully followed (Appendix C). I distributed letters of consent (Appendix E) to participants. In these letters, I outlined the objectives of the study, including the procedures for data collection, reporting, and storage. Participants were informed about the rights of confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any good reason. Pseudonyms were used to represent participants and their respective schools. Participants were informed that interviews during interviewing and conversations during the observation phase would also be tape-recorded. Participants were given the opportunity to read transcripts, add, and subtract any material they felt uncomfortable with as part of the research. In course of conducting member checks, respondents only had access to their own data.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research design of the study. The research explored the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals and investigated how this leadership ideal was manifested in their daily professional lives. A detailed description of the seven key topic areas of this chapter was provided: philosophical orientation to the study, research design, participant selection, data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Qualitative case study was selected as the research design for investigating the servant-leadership

role of Catholic high school principals. Constructivism is the philosophical orientation that guided the study from the design stage to analysis and interpretation stages. Two research methods were identified: interviewing and direct observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a). Each of the methods were described and explained. Transcripts of the interviews and observations, and field notes of observations were analyzed, coded and categorized into themes. Utilizing these methods provided a good descriptive amount of information required to make the study worthwhile. The inductive procedure of inferring themes and patterns from investigating data was used in the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS

I will describe the interview data in Chapter Four and the observation results in Chapter Five. This collective case study was meant to explore the perceived servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals, and how this leadership construct was perceived to be manifest in their professional lives. For this purpose, I conducted semi-structured interviews with six Catholic high school principals from two Catholic school divisions in the Province of Saskatchewan, and observed two of the principals for two weeks each, as described in chapter 3. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the sources and substance of Catholic high school principals' notions of servant-leadership?
2. What are Catholic high school principals' perceptions of their servant-leadership role?
3. How is servant-leadership manifest and experienced by Catholic high school principals in their daily professional lives?

An important obligation of qualitative researchers is to describe the context of any case study (Stake, 1995; Hatch, 2002) so as to present a clear image of the participants and their contexts. Following this exhortation, I first present a brief description of the Catholic education system of the province of Saskatchewan, and the mission statements

of the eight divisions of this system. I then provide information on the number of teaching and support staff, and of enrolled students in each of the participants' schools, and a brief description of each participant in a fashion that sustains their anonymity but that contextualizes their situated contributions to this study. Finally, I draw out themes from the interview data, according to the interview questions, and provide a summary of these themes.

The Participants and Their Contexts

The purpose of this section is to provide the context of participants, namely their school system, school divisions and their mission statements, the populations of their schools, and participants themselves. Pseudonyms have been assigned to participants, their schools, and school divisions.

The Catholic School System in Saskatchewan

The Catholic school system of the province of Saskatchewan is a publicly funded educational system that includes religious education in its curriculum. Its central purpose is to provide a Christ-centered education through schools that are grounded in the traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church. Like the public system, Catholic education operates in accordance with the regulations of the Saskatchewan *Education Act*, 1995, and follows the curriculum adopted by the province of Saskatchewan (Noonan, 1998).

The Catholic school system aims to provide parents the opportunity and freedom to educate their progeny in the religion of their preference. Because the Catholic Church and Catholic schools believe that they have a social mandate to be open to all who desire to benefit from a faith-based education, they respect the wishes of parents and caregivers

who opt for a Catholic education for their children. However, before admission of their children into the system, non-Catholic parents and caregivers are required to complete documentation signifying their acceptance of the Catholic formation and atmosphere of the school. Consequently, the demographic structure of Catholic schools consists of children of Catholic families, and of non-Catholics as well. At the high school level, non-Catholics are expected to take Christian Ethics classes as a requirement for matriculation.

Catholic School Divisions of the Province of Saskatchewan. Like the public school system, the Catholic school system is divided into administrative territories (geographic areas) called school divisions, each of which has a mission statement as a roadmap for the direction to follow. At the time of this research, the eight Catholic school divisions of Saskatchewan had over 37,000 students in 122 schools, and with approximately 2,195 teachers. Over two-thirds of the students enrolled are in the major urban centers.

Even though the eight school divisions of Saskatchewan have different mission statements, their common mandate to proclaim the Gospel message of Jesus Christ (*Lumen gentium*, 1965) seems to unite them. Consequently, their mission statements reflect similar characteristics. A common feature and objective of these mission statements is community building. This is reflected in descriptive terms that they contain, for example *local church*, *Church teachings*, *Catholic community*, *Catholic education*, *Christian freedom*. These expressions call for a leadership style that espouses community building and Gospel values. The mission statements perceive the school divisions and their schools as centers of learning founded on hope, and love, in a common faith in Jesus Christ within the Catholic tradition. Furthermore, the school divisions endeavour to

recognize the special dignity of their students as children of God, and are committed to their holistic growth and development, to academic excellence, and to achievement of provincial educational goals. The mission statements of the eight school divisions are presented in the Table One below.

Table 4.1

Mission Statements of Catholic School Divisions of Saskatchewan

School Divisions	Mission Statements
Ronald	Education is a lifelong process of seeking and coming to know God in the fullness of creation. To assist parents and the local church community in the formation of students in heart, mind, body and spirit. Catholic schools strive to provide an atmosphere of love in which students are inspired to hope in Jesus Christ and have their faith through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Colorado	Dedicated to working with the community and the local church to provide a quality Catholic education that fosters excellence and the development of informed, responsible citizens.
Michigan	To nurture learning and spiritual growth guided by Gospel values and Church teachings.
Munroe	We give glory to God by educating children within a caring Catholic community in God's name, we, in the Munroe Catholic school division, provide opportunities for students: 1. To address their individual needs, interests and gifts 2. To achieve their full potential, with emphasis upon service to others; and, 3. To meet challenges of their life-long journey.
St. Patrick	To improve student learning in a Catholic community guided by Christ our teacher.
Toulon	Our mission is to create hope by fostering learning and honoring diversity in a Catholic environment.
Foxford	To provide a strong, relevant, purposeful, and distinctively Catholic Education which ensures each of our students achieves his or her God-given potential.
St. Ephraim	We are committed to the growth and development of the whole person, in an atmosphere that is characterized by Christian freedom, moral responsibility and a spirit of openness to others that is based on respect and love for all.

Students are encouraged to develop their individual talents and gifts in an atmosphere of freedom and moral responsibility guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church and dedicated to promoting responsibility towards the needs of all people. The mission

statements suggest a leadership ideal that focuses on faith, hope, love, and community building by placing premium on service and care for the interest of all within the school community. Thus, the Catholic school divisions selected for this study recommend and encourage their administrators to adopt a leadership style that espouses care and interest in the growth of individuals issuing from faith, hope, and love, and leading to community building.

The School Divisions Selected for the Study

School division A, hereinafter referred to as Ronald school division comprised about 15,000 students in about 40 schools. At the time of the research, approximately 4,000 students in grades 9 to 12 were enrolled in this school division's high schools. This division's mission statement like those of the other divisions single out Gospel values, interest in parents and the local community, the formation of students, and the creation of a positive environment for students and the school community.

School division B, hereinafter designated as Colorado school division, comprised about over 20 schools and about 11,000 students at the time of this study. Its high schools offered programs for about 4,000 students in grades 9 to 12. Its objectives are similar to those of Ronald school division.

Both school divisions are urban school divisions that cover urban regions that were experiencing rapid economic and demographic growth attributable to the province's economic boom. It was not possible to access official statistics on the exact percentage of non-Catholics to Catholics in these school divisions, but anecdotal evidence suggested that the number of non-Catholics varied from school division to school division, and from school to school, but ranged from 25% to 30% of the total.

Student and Staff Populations of Participants' Schools

Table Two provides information on teachers, support staff, and students of participants' schools. The increasing movement of Canadian Aboriginals into cities, coupled with the gradual increase in immigration to the province of Saskatchewan by international people, especially in the urban centers, led to estimates that the average population of students of other races in each of the Catholic schools varied between 25% and 35%. The student population of these high schools came from a diversity of racial backgrounds including Eastern European, Aboriginal Canadian, Asian, and African descent. As a minority of students were unable to speak and write English because of their non-English-speaking origins, those schools provided classes in English as a Second Language (ESL).

Table 4.2

Statistical Data of Participants Schools

Schools	N_o of teachers	N_o of support staff	N_o of students
St. Jerome	70	30	710
St. Mark	60	20	690
St. Anselm	100	25	1,200
St. John	50	15	800
St. Agnes	60	10	840
St. Agatha	50	15	750

Special needs students formed an integral part of the student population of these schools.

Table 4.2 reveals that each of the six participants had a student population of not less than 650, and also a staff population of 60 or more. A careful study of the table shows that

respondents had enormous administrative responsibilities as they took care of large numbers of both students and staff. Having to deal with huge numbers of people raises the question as to whether servant-leadership was the answer to the possible administrative challenges their principals encountered in their day-to-day interactions in the school community.

The Participants

Angela had all her education in Catholic schools. Her mother was Eastern European Catholic, and her father a Roman Catholic. She was brought up with two faith backgrounds, but grew up mainly as a Roman Catholic. She was greatly influenced in her faith formation by her mother and a few priests who were dedicated educators and chaplains. Coming from a family of eight children, she learned early in life that she was not always the centre of attention. At the time of this study, Angela was in her early fifties, and had spent over 10 years as a principal. She had over 30 years experience in the field of education, having taught mainly in four high schools and apart from being a classroom teacher, she had been involved in many extra-curricular activities including coaching of different sporting activities. Before becoming a principal, she had served as assistant principal for three years in two schools. She was in her second school as principal, and at the time of this study had about 700 students under her care.

Denis described himself as a product of the Catholic education system. He was baptized Catholic, and was greatly influenced in his faith formation by his single parent mother and an older brother, and later enjoyed a faith journey with his girl friend who became his wife. He learned early in life from the sacrifices of his single-parent mother who devotedly raised him and his brothers, that, children can be guided to succeed if they

have the necessary care and motivation. In addition, the example of some priests in the Catholic school system when he was growing up, inspired him in his approach to caring for students. Denis was just over fifty years old. He had elementary school experience for about over half a year before going on to teach in the high school. He had served six years as assistant principal in two high schools before becoming a principal. During his almost 30 year career in education, he had been in six schools. His extensive experiences with special needs children, and students of alternate schools taught him that for **all** students to succeed, each student needs to be treated differently, and according to their particular needs. He was in his sixth year as principal, and in his second school, taking care of over 700 students. All of Denis' experiences as a teacher and principal had been in the high school setting.

Gerald grew up in a family of teachers, in a community blessed with over six different church denominations. As a result, he learned early in life to respect and appreciate difference, and that diversity is a rich source of learning and growth. Gerald did not attend a Catholic school while growing up, but he felt privileged to have been in contact with religion in elementary and high school as prayer and religious instruction were part of school life in his student days. He was greatly influenced in his faith formation by his faith-filled parents and the general faith community in which he lived. He was entering his 26th year of experience in the field of education. He entered school administration after 13 years of teaching, and served as assistant principal for about four years in two schools before being promoted to principal. Gerald had over 1,000 students in his school. He had had nine years of experience as a principal and was in his second school. Gerald also enjoyed serving as a coach in different sports after school hours.

Simon was raised in a committed Catholic family where faith and belief in God, and a Christ-like approach to life, were emphasized. He attributed his Catholic faith to his mother, but gracefully ascribed the deepening of that faith to his wife's parents. Simon started coaching sporting activities at a very young age, and it was through coaching that he started to develop leadership qualities early in life. He had had over twenty years experience as a teacher, having been involved in the formation of students in four schools. His leadership qualities projected him on a quick trajectory of school leadership. He was department head for three years and assistant principal for over four years. Simon had over 800 students in his school, and did not have elementary school teaching experience. He had spent over five years as principal.

Terese viewed her mother as the most significant influence on her Catholic faith and leadership qualities. Her mother always made her think of the impact of her actions on other people. Her father was not Catholic, but both parents were a huge inspiration to her and encouraged her to pursue excellence in whatever she did. Terese had two years experience as an elementary school teacher, and became assistant principal after 12 years as a high school teacher. She was in her ninth school. She was promoted principal after serving two years as assistant principal, and at the time of this study had been serving as principal for over 15 years out of her almost 30 years service in education, and had over 800 students in her care.

John grew up in a faith community with parents who took their faith seriously. He was an altar server right throughout his high school years to university for some very good priests who helped and inspired him in his faith. He had been in education for close to 28 years. He started his teaching career in the elementary school and had taught a

variety of subjects in most grades He became an elementary school principal, for one year before he went on to teach in a high school. During his teaching career, he was a consultant for physical health and social sciences. John felt that he joined the ranks of school administrators because of opportunities to fill in for principals when they were away from school attending to other school business. He became high school principal after serving three years as assistant principal. He was serving in his second school as principal, and was in his fifth year as principal in a high school with over 700 students.

The Interview Results

In this section, I will present the results of the interviews according to the research questions. In the first research question, I sought information on: (a) the sources of participants' notions of servant-leadership, and (b) the substance of respondents' notions of servant-leadership.

Sources and Substance of Catholic High School Principals' Notions of Servant-Leadership: Influencing Agents

The following section explores the sources of participants' notions of servant-leadership. The section is divided into two main sections: a) the sources of participants' notions of servant-leadership, and, b) the substance of respondents' notions of servant-leadership.

Sources of Catholic High School Principals' Notions of Servant-Leadership

All participants acknowledged that other people and circumstances served as vehicles through which they acquired their notions of servant-leadership. These included parents, early childhood upbringing, siblings, former directors, school division policies, former principals, professional colleagues, and priests.

Parents, and early childhood upbringing. Without exception, participants gave credit to their parents and their upbringing as valuable contributions to their concepts of servant-leadership. Angela described her experience as follows:

Families play a huge role. Again I . . . come back to my mom, . . . Because staff, parents, students know that is who I am. I am not faking it. That is who I am, period. Just because I have become principal didn't mean I suddenly put on the cloak of servant-leadership. That is how I was brought up. Probably my best example is my mother. My mom will be close to 80 this November 2008; she still works full time as a pharmacist. (p. 10)

Terese, speaking in a calm and gentle tone over the telephone, reflected Angela's ideas. She said, "It has been a long, long time, probably before I became an administrator. It is probably my upbringing, and I think what Jesus calls us to do" (p. 2). As if he had conferred with Terese, Denis concurred, "I do not think I changed my style because I was introduced to the concept of servant-leadership. I think I was a servant-leader to begin with. And I think of my colleagues, most of us are" (p. 4). Denis acknowledged that his childhood upbringing had immensely shaped the way he viewed leadership and the care he felt children needed in order to develop to their full potential. Denis' reflection on his childhood seemed to imply that people's background, and the care they received as children had a direct bearing on their outlook on leadership and the leadership style they adopted as adults.

The valuable role of mothers as sources of notions of servant-leadership is described by Denis:

When *I was three* my dad died. We were *living in Europe* at the time. There were four boys in our family. Jaston, Angel, my brother who is in St. John as well. . . . Dad came home Friday night from work. . . . [and] he died suddenly of a massive heart attack. . . . Mom moved to Saskatchewan because there was university here for her four boys. She was a trained nurse, so she worked at St. Anne's hospital. So growing up without a dad, and sort of a lower middle class, when mom didn't go to work there was no sick time. She didn't get paid, so we never had money. I

didn't think we were poor, but . . . I know now that we were fairly poor. And I think that really shaped the way I view people, and view kids. I wasn't a privileged kid. And so really, my heart is with those kids that are not privileged. I resent people who talk about the disadvantage of single homes, and single parents. It is a factor, it doesn't have to be a liability. There are lots of single parents who are very successful with their kids, and there are a lot of two parent families with messed up kids. So that has probably been the biggest one . . . So, long before anyone talked to me about servant-leadership, and Christ-centered leadership, my heart was with those kids that needed extra help. (p. 1)

In a similar vein, Terese said:

My parents were a huge influence on me. . . . My mother particularly was a person of strong faith and belief. . . . But my mother was probably more of an influence. . . . She always encouraged us to think about what we did. To think about what we did and the impact it had on other people. To make sure that we were following basically that concept of 'what would Jesus do?' and making sure that whatever we did in life, how we treated people, how we interacted with people, how we treated ourselves followed what we were taught by the stories of Jesus. . . . And because of that, when I went into education, my goal was always to help kids to learn whatever it took them to learn. The values that I was taught by my parents were what I have taken with me into my education, into teaching. I have done the same thing as I moved into administration. . . . I believe very strongly that we need to treat each other with respect and dignity. . . . What I always try and do is get kids to be fair and reasonable. Part of what I do is use the lessons I learned growing up, and ask them to do the same kind of thing. To treat people with respect and dignity. . . . To treat people with respect and dignity. (p. 1)

According to Simon, attributing one's notions of servant-leadership to family background did not mean his family was perfect. Rather, the family was a place to relate with other people early in life, and where one learned to forgive others, knowing that imperfection is always a possibility in relationships, and that through mistakes of imperfection one can aspire to perfection.

Without discounting the role of their fathers, Angela, Denis, Terese, and Simon gave special credit to their mothers for inculcating in them their initial notions of servant-leadership through the examples of their service, sacrifice, faith, and work ethic. Denis referred to his mother as "My Mother Teresa" (p. 7) thus eulogizing her as incarnating

the selfless and sacrificial spirit of service of the Albanian Roman Catholic nun, who for 45 years ministered to the poor, the sick, the orphaned and the dying in India. His single-parent mother, through the care and sacrifice she made to educate him and his three older brothers, had contributed immensely in making them what they had become. For Denis, *service* was central to his call as a Catholic high school principal to bring hope to others just as his mother did. Angela also praised her mother for her sacrifices and devotion in raising her and her seven siblings. She observed, “And I guess the same thing . . . is the view I saw of my mother growing up, how she gave to her kids, and what she did” (p. 3).

Gerald and John did not extol their mothers, but acknowledged that their parents and family backgrounds played key roles in their notions of servant-leadership. In effect, participants’ observations appeared to allude to family background and childhood upbringing as the cradle of their notions of leadership. The credit participants bestowed on their parents, and early childhood upbringing, as the source of their notions of servant-leadership, echoes Proverbs 22: 6; “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Interaction with siblings. Three participants were of the view that all experiences are useful as long as one wrapped him/herself in positive assumptions. Angela, Denis, and Terese regarded their interaction with their siblings as having helped them to learn early in life to live in community. And, depending on their position in the order of birth within the family, and the care they received from siblings, they learned about care and support for others, and to look beyond their egos and learned how to negotiate, knowing that other people were as important as they, and had needs that demanded attention.

Angela said:

Growing up in a large family, we are 8, and you have to care for each one. Each and every one. You are not the centre of attention. . . . so I see the importance of supporting one another, helping one another, being there. And yes, within each little group, you also learn to negotiate. You learn to love, handle situations. . . . I think more than anything, that is where I learned servant-leadership. (p. 4)

Similarly, Denis observed:

I am the youngest in the family. I think that has something to do with it too. Because I had people looking out for me. I did not necessarily have to look out for them. They were all older. I guess if you had a parent who was stern or a dictator, or told you what to do, then I think you are what you learn. And I think seeing those different styles in the family. My brothers and I are still close. I do not know if it is that uncommon. . . . The idea that servant-leadership, I do not know any other way that I was raised. But I can certainly see that idea of say the old German stern taskmaster parent would create children that either model it or swear never to do it again. But we always said about kids that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. And I think that is true about leadership styles that, what you grew up with will probably determine the style that you will adopt. Whatever you feel most comfortable with. (p. 20)

Denis' observation concurs with the literature that good examples of servant-leadership inspire servant-leadership characteristics in people. Just as his older brothers looked out for him, he had learned to look out for others in his turn.

Terese intimated that she learned the importance of respecting the freedom of others from interacting with her siblings, because she was allowed the autonomy to pursue her personal interests and goals in making her lifelong career choices. From this influence, she cherished and valued individual freedom and interests in her dealings with students and staff as a way of providing them with hope for their future. Simon, Gerald, and John however were silent on the influence of their siblings as sources of their notions of servant-leadership.

Directors, school division policies, former principals, professional colleagues, and priests. Directors of school divisions, former principals, professional colleagues, and

priests were also perceived as sources of notions of servant-leadership. Two respondents offered the following comments. Angela said:

Servant-leadership became a real focus of our school division. I heard lots of the word *servant-leadership* from Tom Anton who was our Director at that time. And I know as a principal group, we took that on as one of our themes. . . . Someone just used the term. . . . I do not know whether that helps. But I guess watching others, watching other leaders, Tom, John, Randy, and now Maria. What they offer as leaders was always quiet, and behind the scenes. . . . These were examples of wonderful people I have worked with. (p. 2)

In agreement with Angela, Denis said:

Anderson, our former school [Division] director brought that in and that probably would have been 1999. . . . That was an initiative of the whole school system for administrative servant-leadership. And I am not sure why they did that. I think Anderson was just a visionary, and very firm in his beliefs as our director. (p. 4)

These two comments indicate that good examples of exemplary servant-leaders do not go unnoticed, and that one way to give hope to a person is through being a good and helpful example. As well, these comments seem to suggest that providing exemplary leadership sometimes implies treading the lonely path of innovativeness with an appealing vision. In addition, good initiatives that serve the interest of followers leave fond and lasting memories in people's minds even if they were not completely understood at their initial stages. John, Terese, and Gerald did not directly cite directors as sources of their notions of servant-leadership but referred to conferences, workshops, and retreats organized under the auspices of their directors as occasions when they heard of *servant-leadership*.

Denis was alone in mentioning the policies and practices of his school division as a source of his notions of servant-leadership. He observed:

[Servant-leadership] is something that you can hang your hat on and be reminded that it isn't about me. Because, sometimes we all get selfish and it can become about me. But because we have the servant-leadership concept with us, then we can't stray from it. Because, it has been sort of defined by some of our symbols. We have symbols of our office. (Picks up a stone). Each Catholic principal

receives a rock when they become a principal. And it is a symbol of which we are all a part of. I think the analogy of Peter and the Rock. But, also that we are anchored to something, and that is the school system. That, we are just a small piece of it. [Principals are also handed] the pot of gold, and the servant-leadership bowl. These are our symbols, and towels. So washing of the feet in that Easter vigil, Holy Thursday is probably the most meaningful to me. The washing of the feet is probably the most meaningful experience of the whole Triduum [Liturgical ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday]. And I think it has to do with what I do for a living, and the idea of serving others. (p. 4)

Denis' comment suggests that apart from speaking about servant-leadership and putting it into practice, its representation through signs and concrete objects helps imprint the leadership concept in the mind. This symbolism, as Denis explained, is a powerful and memorable sign of servant-leadership.

Some principals, professional colleagues, and exemplary priests with whom participants had the opportunity to work, were also exemplars of servant-leadership.

Angela posed a question and then went ahead to drive her point home:

Would I have learned about servant-leadership if I had been in another system? . . . as assistant principal, I grew up here. I was allowed freedom to do almost all what I needed to do as a teacher as long as it was good for kids. . . . I was allowed to laugh and make mistakes. And I have never forgotten that. . . . Going to Catholic schools, seeing what Catholic teachers did in the early years to provide me a chance to go to school, to provide me a chance to work in a school, and to provide a chance for my kids to go to a Catholic school is huge. I don't think I understood it as a young teacher. I truly understand it now as an experienced teacher, as a principal. (p. 4)

In the above comment, Angela seemed to offer advice that servant-leadership departs from just helping people to mastering conventions and established norms. Rather, servant-leadership implies guiding individuals to use freedom responsibly for the promotion of their own growth and the general progress of the communities they belong to. By citing teachers in the Catholic schools she attended, Angela underscored the importance of selfless leaders as valuable sources of the notions of servant-leadership.

John concurred with Angela and was especially full of admiration for one of his former principals. He observed:

I think one of the things I gained from, was working with a couple of individuals I have a great respect for. One was my former principal, who really exemplified ethical faith-filled character. He was an individual that cared about students, the staff, the community. He was very respectful to everyone that was there. . . . And not only modeled that, but provided that in terms of his support to all of us in the school, and I think that became a part of how we were expected as staff members to exemplify and work within ourselves. And I think that resonated with me. (p. 4)

Angela and Terese indicated that positive leadership values of their former principals such as their encouragement of initiatives, freedom to explore new methods of teaching, and the departure from an over-controlling leadership style, contributed to their notions of servant-leadership. All the respondents were unanimous in distancing themselves from an over-bearing leadership style, and believed that an over-controlling leadership smothers healthy initiatives and the human spirit, while stifling healthy and budding leadership gifts. They were full of praise for the positive leadership experiences they had before becoming administrators. In their positions as servant-leaders, they stayed clear of the negative leadership styles they had experienced as teachers. Simon summarized these views as follows:

. . . . Obviously in 18 years, I probably had the good fortune of working with a minimum of six different principals. In the building, as many VPs have been on board. So you see a whole series of styles, and what that allows a person to do in a number of cases. The same thing I have done in my coaching career. You hopefully take what sort of appealed to you in all those leadership styles. And you hope that you can in some cases emulate that or at least add those qualities to what you want to do . . . as a leader. So, very many good people. We had one particular administrator though, very well organized person. Well spoken. Represented himself very well, but definitely did many things from the point of view that people were going to do them simply because they were told to do them, if I can put it that way. . . . And I really think that the school ran effectively, and on the basis of, from a teacher's perspective, uncertainty, anxiety, if I can put it that way. And I do not blame any one for that. I think it was just the atmosphere

that resulted. And in my mind, it was not an atmosphere that I felt was conducive to long term good health either physically, emotionally, or spiritually. So I would say that experience for two years, probably shaped me more in terms of how I felt I want to do, lead, when I was thrust into certain positions, or certain roles. (p. 4)

The above comment suggests that participants learned from both the good and bad examples of leaders whose leadership styles they had experienced. Consequently, the need to avoid the top-down administrative style re-enforced them in eschewing a leadership model that concentrated on efficiency to the detriment of respect for the individual.

The discussions with Gerald, Terese, Simon, and John, implied that they viewed priests as inspiring sources of their Catholic faith only. But for Angela and Denis, some priests were also sources of their notions of servant-leadership. According to Denis, as a young boy, he saw what servant-leadership is through the sacrifice and service of some priests towards his older brothers and other boys in the Catholic system. Angela singled out one example:

Very much influenced by a few priests, many unfortunately who have just passed away. . . . One of the examples, I guess more than anything. . . . I am remembering is at a school function. Fr. Tony was in the hallways, and I watched him picking up garbage, and picking up paper. Just picking it up. And I can remember thinking, he doesn't have to do that. He is doing it because he is proud of what is going on around the school. He is proud of his kids. He always called them his kids. And if he can do it why can't I? (p. 3)

In summary, participants saw the origin of their notions of servant-leadership as stemming from their parents, and siblings. As Denis said, "The apple does not fall far from the tree" (p. 21). This implies that the notions of servant-leadership had been acquired from their childhood and family backgrounds. Other influential sources were directors, priests, former principals, and colleagues.

Parenting and sporting activities. The data revealed that for Simon, John, and Denis, their role as parents served as an additional source of their notions of servant-leadership. John pointed out, “Personally, the birth of my children . . . also helped with the leadership aspect” (p. 1). That some participants perceived the care of their own children as sources of their notions of servant-leadership points to the fact that servant-leadership is more of a lifestyle than simply following principles. As a father, Denis sees himself as the father of the 700 students of his school.

Angela and Simon acknowledged having acquired some notions of servant-leadership through their involvement in sporting activities. According to Angela, coaching sporting activities added to sharpening her sensitivity towards other people and their different contexts. Simon agreed and said that he acquired certain leadership qualities through coaching and engagement in sporting activities. He pointed out:

Throughout my life, I think I was able to develop certain qualities With the sports that I played. And the roles that I took on when I was on teams. And I started coaching at a very young age. And I understood that having an impression on youngsters and young adults when you become a coach is not a task to be taken lightly. And definitely I had a lot in the years that I coached. (p. 1)

Simon’s report indicates that extra-curricular activities such as sports are not only meant for fun, but also for the acquisition of certain leadership qualities, because of the interactions that go on leading to the establishment of relations from which people learn.

Substance of Catholic High School Principals’ Notions of Servant-Leadership

The results, described above, bring two crucial questions to mind: (a) Does a person need inspiring sources in order to form the notions of servant-leadership? (b) Are servant-leaders self-made? If Catholic high school principals attribute the sources of their notions of servant-leadership to their family backgrounds and upbringing, and the

inspiration of admirable examples, what forms the basis of their servant-leadership role?

In answer, participants identified their faith in Jesus Christ, and the positive results of their practice of servant-leadership as the substance of their basis for this role.

Faith in Jesus Christ as substance of participants' notions of servant-leadership. All respondents pointed out that their faith in Jesus Christ challenged them to live according to His teachings not only in word but also in deed. This challenge is reflected in participants' frequent reference to the question, *What would Jesus do?*

All participants were grateful for the liberty to practice their Faith in the school context by giving hope to the people placed under their care, because as Simon put it, faith is a gift to be shared with other people. For Gerald, Terese, and John, education is not only about knowledge, but also about faith, about hope for the future of children. In addition, education in the Catholic school context implies meeting a person's holistic needs and involves catering to both the physical and the spiritual dimensions. Denis and John respectively expressed it this way:

Well, it does mean spreading the news of what Jesus taught us. . . . It gives us an opportunity to help kids find out who they are. But also with the example of Christ. (p. 2)

I think I take a look at depending on where I am in the high school. What would Jesus do? Is a kind of a perspective that I would have in dealing with the community whether it be a staff, student. I think that is an important one that you can look at. Having that sense of respect for everyone, so that you can deal with the situation in a proper fashion. I like to create a win win situation as best as we can. (p. 4)

Faith in Jesus Christ invites Christian leaders and their followers to treat others as they want to be treated themselves. The humility of Jesus Christ is an invitation to exercise leadership in imitation of His humble leadership which upholds the dignity of each individual. All participants viewed their faith in Jesus Christ as helping others discover

their potentials, who they are, and the importance of faith in their lives. According to participants, faith in Jesus Christ challenged them to think and reflect on their day-to-day interactions with staff, students, and parents.

The general view was that servant-leadership and faith are in a kind of symbiotic relationship but with faith informing servant-leadership. As Simon said:

I do not think you can have one without the other. And I may go back to my former school. You spend 18 years in a building where you form relationships with people. And you see those people deal with grief, with loss, with things that are part of life. We all know that. And you do not go through almost 20 years where they support you, and you support them, without developing a deeper faith, and . . . without your faith helping you and those around you cope with those on certain issues that happen in life. (p. 5)

Whether servant-leadership and faith are inseparable or not is a contentious issue, because faith as expressed by respondents might not be an important issue for some principals in non-Christian and public school settings. The fact that some leaders in non-Christian and public settings may not perceive faith as an important dimension of their leadership does not imply that they cannot be servant-leaders. For the Catholic school principal however, faith and servant-leadership are intertwined and inseparable, because according to participants, exercising leadership in the Catholic school context forms part of their daily living out of their Christian faith. Gleaned from participants' responses is the understanding that faith in Jesus Christ is the substance of their practice of servant-leadership. In fact, Catholic schools have the mandate to proclaim the Gospel message (*Lumen gentium*, 1965), which may explain why participants viewed their servant-leadership role as inseparably connected with their faith.

Positive evidence of servant-leadership style as additional substance of participants' notions of servant-leadership. Although participants seemed not to be

motivated by rewards in their practice of servant-leadership, they were heartened by positive responses from parents, staff, and students. Angela, Denis, Gerald, and John indicated that the positive response from staff and students were heartening evidence of their servant-leadership role. Angela and Denis indicated their joy at seeing a student who had a difficult previous academic year blossom in the following school year as a result of their patient encouragement of the student. Additionally, John and Angela mentioned the delight of meeting students years after they had left school, and seeing them blossom and being involved in community projects and activities they had abhorred in their student days. To Angela, such examples were encouraging, and she regarded them as part of the long term nurturing process of servant-leadership that brought about the growth of followers. In a calm but assuring voice, Terese articulated the following words as an example of the positive influence of her practice of servant-leadership:

With some parents, it is just when their children do something that is bad, and they get into trouble and get suspension or something. I do talk to the parents and say to them, 'you know, this is not the worse thing your son could have done or your daughter could have done. They made a mistake. They did something very unbecoming, there has to be consequences.' But just by making it okay that kids make mistakes and let us learn from that and let us move forward, and let us make sure it does not happen again. So just taking away that embarrassment that parents feel because their kids do something stupid, about which they feel very embarrassed, and they take ownership for it. Just removing that pressure from them, and allowing them to deal with their children in a more positive way. In terms of teachers, I will always encourage teachers to try different things. And I also let them know, and I always tell them, you know what, why do you not try this? If it does not work well, it does not work. Never getting too excited when things do not go well. We talk about it, we deal with it. We try and salvage what we can from a situation. But for the most part letting people know it is okay to take a risk, and that they are not going to be punished for taking a risk. (p. 14)

This quotation reveals that the servant-leader is one who inspires hope, sees the silver lining in the darkest cloud, brings about healing, tries to cultivate a deeper understanding of events and happenings, and sees the positive in what others view as negative. Through

such encouraging demeanor, it was possible for participants to inspire optimistic results in parents, staff, and students and to be rewarded with words of gratitude from the school community.

Synthesis

In summary, these experiences point to the importance of family background as the origin of the notion of servant-leadership that cannot be underestimated. It is reinforced by interaction with superiors, and grows into a disposition towards exercising servant-leadership in school life.

Faith in Jesus Christ appears to have served as the foundation for the notion of servant-leadership for the participants of this study and challenges them to play their part in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel in their daily lives as principals.

Catholic High School Principals' Perceptions of Their Role as Servant-Leaders

In this section, I discuss the results of research question two. The section is divided into two parts. Part one presents participants' perceptions of their role as servant-leaders, the metaphors and definitions they assign to servant-leadership, and some practicalities of the leadership style. Tables presenting participants' impressions, metaphors, and definitions of servant-leadership have been provided. The second part of the section discusses what participants believe their school communities expect of them as servant-leaders.

Participants' Impressions of their Role as Principals in the Catholic High School

Without waiting to think, in describing their impressions about being principals, Angela, Denis, and Simon indicated that they loved it, felt honored in the function, and viewed it as a privilege, and a gift. Gerald, Terese, and John perceived their role as

principals as an opportunity to express their faith. All viewed their position as a tremendous challenge, to make their schools happy, joyful, faith-filled, and academic communities where students and staff achieved their potentials and to assure parents that their children were being served according to Catholic educational objectives.

For all participants, the freedom to express their faith in their work place could not be overlooked as it contributes to their general disposition to their responsibilities as leaders. Continuing this train of thought, John added that being permitted to express his faith at school gave him a different dimension in working with staff, students, and community, thus, underscoring the importance of the school community.

Table 4.3

Participants' Impressions of their Servant-Leadership Role

Participants	Comments
Angela	A tremendous honor, a tremendous gift, a tremendous challenge. In fact, I love it.
Denis	Well, I love it. . . . But the reason I wanted to become a principal I think was because I really wanted to make a difference in the lives of kids . . .
Gerald	For me it is important to be a principal in a Catholic school division, because I can talk about my faith. And talk about how Jesus taught, how Jesus acted, and because of that how we should be treating each other.
Simon	Privileged, honored, overwhelmed at times. It is a major responsibility. It is one I do not take lightly. It is a position of leadership.
Terese	And so being a principal in a Catholic school, it is wonderful to have, to be able to express your faith, and to talk about it.
John	I think the Catholic system is a unique experience, because you are tied within the context of education with your faith. And it gives a whole different dimension in relationship to working with staff, students, community. . . .

While they had a lot to say, Table 4.3 above presents the mindset of participants concerning their role. The similarity of views expressed indicates that while different locations may present different challenges, relationships and interactions with human beings have much in common. Glaser (2002) has observed that our experiences also

reflect the experiences of others, thus we need to keep ourselves “aware that our experience is but a particular expression of the common human condition” (p. 44).

Metaphors of Servant-Leadership Expressed by Participants

I asked participants: “What metaphor would you attribute to servant-leadership?” All seemed to hesitate before answering this question. This seeming hesitancy may indicate that servant-leadership defies comparison or representation, and that the leadership concept goes beyond the obvious, it is multi-dimensional and difficult to reduce to one single thing or category. Servant-leadership is better seen in action. Table 4.4 summarizes the answers that were given:

Table 4.4

Participants’ Metaphors of Servant-Leadership

Participants	Metaphors
Angela	<i>The patience of a saint.</i> . . . Because you need it all the time, because sometimes you see the end, and you want to skip all the process.
Denis	For me servant-leadership is <i>just a way of life</i> , and you are able to do for others what you do for yourself.
Gerald	With servant-leadership, I think <i>compassion</i> , compassion for others. <i>Understanding</i> others and their job, and just <i>caring</i> for individuals around you.
Simon	Servant-leadership is like <i>a radar on a ship in a larger ocean</i> . You are trying to help guide a larger community of great existence, moving a smaller boat on the larger ocean. We take advantage of the larger movement. We create ripples through the larger community.
Terese	I think it would be <i>a mother and a child. A caring mother raising a child.</i>
John	I think <i>talk the talk and walk the talk</i> . I go back to the idea of “What would Jesus do?” “ <i>Practice what you preach</i> ”, I think is a key one.

These answers have in common altruism, caring for others, living by example, and the desire to serve others. None of the participants saw servant-leadership as ego-centric. All saw it is a practical and outgoing leadership style that seeks to serve the other and to help the other develop. Qualities such as *patience*, *compassion*, and *care of a mother*, point to

the concern of respondents for their followers. Phrases such as *servant-leadership as a way of life, practicing what one preaches, and creating ripples through the larger community* indicate a leadership style of influence that benefits others. Simon's metaphor of a radar suggests relationships, because just as a radar cannot determine the direction, distance, height, or speed of a moving object without using transmitted and reflected radio waves, servant-leadership without the *waves of relationships* would be meaningless. Apart from the general idea of altruism which seems to be reflected in the metaphors, Angela's metaphor: *the patience of a saint*, hints at the challenges of a leadership style that is not divorced from tensions and difficulties.

The Meaning of Leadership in a Catholic High School Setting

I asked each principal to provide a definition of servant-leadership as a way of ascertaining their understanding of the leadership style. A summary of their definitions are presented in Table 4.5. The six definitions in the table offer a snapshot of participants' understandings of servant-leadership. These definitions do not contradict the views expressed through metaphors. They reflect an understanding of servant-leadership as a leadership style that is made effective through personal example, altruism, self-sacrifice, empowerment of others, care for the interest and growth of others, and making leaders out of followers. In fact, servant-leadership is better described as a way of life in which the leader seeks to serve rather than basking in his/her position as a personal accomplishment. Gerald and Simon explained that servant-leadership is all about moving away from one's self, from the ego-centric, to really providing service to others, and living one's faith through one's work within the school community. It is about the use of authority for the growth of others. Analysis of the definitions participants provided

indicate that, although people might view servant- leadership from slightly different perspectives, concern for others remains their common interest.

Table 4.5

Participants' Definitions of Servant-Leadership

Participants	Definitions
Angela	The giving of one's self for what is right, for what is just.
Denis	It is doing to others as you would have them do unto you.
Gerald	Allowing individuals to grow by directing them to do activities and things that you would expect yourself to do. . . . I show by example what I expect my staff and students to do.
Simon	Leadership by example, by living, and encouraging others to be leaders themselves.
Terese	When a person in a position of authority, uses that position to empower others to be caring, loving, Christian people, who help others empower others to do good.
John	Living your faith within the context of your professionalism, savoring the characteristics and qualities, faith, and individuals within the community, and to celebrate those successes that have taken place.

Underlying these definitions is the idea of a perceptive and intuitive sensitivity of a leader, to see and express what remains hidden. Angela's definition elicits the question of *what is right and just?* The answer lies hidden in the definitions provided by the other participants, and which can only be unraveled through practice. John seemed to summarize all the definitions as living one's faith in the context of one's professionalism. In short, for Catholic high school principals, their day-to-day practice of servant-leadership would be incomplete if separated from their Faith.

Some Practicalities of Servant-Leadership

All participants passionately articulated their understanding of leadership in a Catholic high school as the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ as the source of true freedom and hope for all. Furthermore, it is not enough to talk intellectually about

the characteristics of leadership since students and the school community needed to see and feel these characteristics in everyday practice and be guided towards the importance of service in their communities. Denis, Angela, and Terese respectively articulated this as follows:

Well, it does mean, spreading the news of what Jesus taught us. . . . We need to instill in kids today, even more so because of the message that is being taught outside our school system today, that it is not all about me. That we have service projects for kids to volunteer to help. And I think what I would be saying . . . is that, if we are not teaching kids to serve others through our own actions of serving, then where are they going to learn this? Because they certainly are not going to get that from Future Shop. Where it is *buy now and pay later*, and it is *buy the bigger box*. . . . So my comment . . . will be, 'This is the only way to lead', is by serving others and showing people through example that it isn't about me, because I think we live in a selfish society. (p. 2)

One of the things I would say, [is that] Jesus loved . . . children and he fits all of us, and everyone in the school system. And I always say he must like me a little bit, because I fit both categories. Where does He fit? He would be down there pulling in the nets, he would be down there serving the food, he would be down there cleaning the messes. But as the Apostle Paul would say, they saw in him 'nothing is too small not to do or to ignore, and no one is not as important as someone else'. And he led by doing it, it wasn't I will tell you what to do, it is I will show you what to do. And I think that is really important to the principal too, because we have too many people in our lives telling us what to do instead of walking it along with us. (p. 2)

For me, I think one of the key things is, my job is to be a servant-leader, and to set example for the people that I work with, whether it be for my colleagues, whether it be for my students, whether it be for parents, people in the community. My job is to set an example and to help in terms of faith development by the example that I set. So I can't expect other people to be respectful and to live a faith life if I do not model those as well. For me that is the important thing. I think that I am easy to talk to, that I am not a person who holds grudges. Or we could have heated discussions, and I do not get mad at them and take it out at them at another time or get even with them. I think people see me as somebody who is easy to talk to. Who has a strong sense of empathy, and someone who really cares about all the people in the school. (p. 2)

These participants seemed to extol exemplary leadership as the way to inspire and inculcate leadership qualities in followers. All respondents seemed to suggest the

development of encouraging, uplifting and hopeful relationships between principal and all within the school community. In such an atmosphere, occasional chastisements from the leader would be readily accepted.

Additionally, participants seemed to suggest that demonstrating service to followers by serving them is a valuable way of helping them learn what it means to serve. Furthermore, respondents saw their schools as places for living out their Christian mandate of spreading the Good News. As well, participants seemed to express that their own exemplary lives were priceless ways of teaching the people in their school communities what it means to live in healthy relationships with members of the community. Participants further seemed to indicate that caring for followers through empathy convinced them to imitate the good example. In summation, respondents seemed to be repeating the popular saying; *Actions speak louder than words*.

School Community Expectations of Servant-Leaders in Catholic High Schools

The reason for the existence of leaders is the followers (Bruce, 2006). In the school context, followers are students, staff, and parents, and the principal is more useful if he/she fulfills the expectations of the school community. Participants appreciated that their school communities viewed servant-leadership as an ongoing process, empowering and helping people to grow, building relationships, building communities, helping followers support one another, and showing compassion for and understanding of followers.

Parents, Staff, and Students' Expectations of Catholic High School Principals.

Participants were not unaware of the expectations their school communities held for them. These expectations were that principals serve their school communities as

enablers of people's potentials, rather than punishers of wrongdoing. Additionally, their job required them to support those in their school community. Denis described this as follows:

Well, I think [parents] expect me to do the best job I can to help their kids grow . . . Parents want to send their kids to a school where they know their kids are safe, and that they are being treated with respect, and that they are learning. . . . I think the staff sees me as the captain of the ship. I do not like the term boss. But they often refer to me as boss. And so I think they want somebody who . . . will support them . . . So I do not think kids see as any thing other than stereotypical as high school principal who wears tie and walks around and kicks kids out of school. That is too harsh. Because, there aren't kids that we are kicking out of school. . . . The larger community, I think is still of the mentality that they want us to produce students capable of finding their place in the larger society. A lot of it is around work, and occupational training, critical thinking skills, they just want kids that are well versed and well prepared. (p. 17)

Respondents articulated that in their understanding, students expect them to be impartial, empathetic, and to treat them with respect; that staff members appreciate a leader who is organized, efficient, fair, impartial, non-judgmental, empathetic, and supportive.

According participants, parents, while expecting some of the above, would prefer a principal who treats their children with respect, promotes their learning, makes them grow, builds positive relationships, communicates well, speaks from the heart, can be trusted, and in whose presence people feel comfortable to express their ideas. Additional expectations include honesty, equity, and compassion. Participants articulated that leadership that exists to serve its own interests to the neglect of constituents needs would have no moral legitimacy. Participants did not have difficulties identifying what they thought their school communities expected of them, which probably reflected their awareness and sensitivity to the needs of their communities.

Servant-leadership as an ongoing process. Respondents agreed that servant-leadership, is a journey or a learning process. For example, misconduct of a student in the

present time does not necessarily determine what he/she becomes in the future. The patient guidance of a servant-leader enables students to grow out of undesirable habits, helping them to develop gradually to their full potential. Denis and Terese lamented that they have sometimes been accused of being too soft on students because of misunderstandings about the import of servant-leadership as an ongoing process. However, as Denis indicated, it is an accusation he proudly accepts.

Participants indicated that servant-leadership requires an attitude that explores numerous ways of helping others achieve success, that the process is very challenging and at times very painful. But the process sharpens one's patience which ultimately makes one a better person, and implies that the opinions of others are not ignored, but taken into consideration to arrive at solutions that are beneficial to the school community. To better understand participants' ideas about servant-leadership as a process, their own words follow:

It is a process of how you reach the end. It is all the trials and tribulations and the work and the relationships, and the going back and starting again. It will get to the answer. It really will. Sometimes it takes too long, and if you are a person that likes to get things done, the process almost kills you. . . . We all know we are going to get to the end, but it is the process where everyone is involved and if there is anything you learn as an administrator, you have to learn the process. But it takes too long. . . . But it involves people, and when you involve people, it takes time. (Angela; p. 15)

Servant-leadership is an ongoing process each and everyday. And my understanding of servant-leadership is really that you are never there for yourself. That everything you do within the building, is to move other people forward to understand themselves better, while empowering them to be leaders as well. (Simon; p. 3)

These above reflections indicate that participants needed to cultivate the virtue of patience through which they gained a better understanding of themselves as persons. And, understanding themselves better served them well in exercising leadership for the

success of their school communities. Terese provided a further insight in that over the years, she had come to the understanding that, to succeed as a servant-leader, it was more her reaction to people rather than people's reaction to her that mattered. John supported Terese's insight and pointed out that the process of servant-leadership makes room for growth and opportunities to move forward, rather than providing occasions to blame others. This reflection suggests that laying blame on others could create a situation where the leader concentrates on negatives rather than on positives that inspire and build up followers.

Empowering and helping the growth of people. Participants pointed out that because servant-leadership departs from self-centeredness, it seeks to empower followers to grow. Simon gave this example of empowerment before becoming a principal:

Well, if I think back to when I felt empowered, it was when I felt that my opinion was valued, that my work was valued, that individuals were comfortable with me talking and expressing how I felt or how I went about doing those things. (p. 18)

This experience suggests that leaders in schools cultivate respect for the opinions of others as growing leaders, and that disrespect for the opinions of followers today may be tantamount to a refusal to develop leaders for their organizations.

Simon, Denis, and Terese pointed out that in the school community, empowerment and growth means that the weakest in the community are not overlooked, and students' voices and opinions are considered during decision making. One way of empowering students includes being present at their meetings, not to control or run these, but to give support. Giving support to students at their meetings however does not denote approval of all their suggestions, but an opportunity to affirm the need for discussion and collaboration. John agreed and suggested that sporting events are useful for encouraging

and empowering students by celebrating their successes, and by supporting and being concerned about what interests them. Simon pointed out that referring to the school as “*our school*” and “*not my school*” makes a difference in people’s psychology about their school. Implied in these comments on support and empowerment of students might be the admonition that, the leader who considers his/her presence at activities of students as a waste of time would jettison precious opportunities for empowering them.

Gerald articulated that a good way to help staff members grow into leaders is to involve them in committee work. Looking out for skills in staff members and assigning them to activities that help them develop and grow gives them the confidence necessary to develop their gifts and skills. He implied that to make leaders out of people, it helps to trust them with responsibilities. According to Terese, empowerment not only creates a good atmosphere in the school, but it also leads to the creation of strong future servant-leaders. Empowerment also means encouraging people to try different things while taking initiatives for their own growth. She cited the example of a department head in her school to explain her point:

For instance, I have a new department head this year. I do not think three years ago she would have even considered applying for department head. But she is a very strong person. She has good ideas. She works hard, and she was encouraged to try different things and do different things. And because she did feel that she had support, it allowed her to take the risk of becoming a department head, and she is very good. (p. 14)

For Simon, a great danger to the empowerment and growth of followers was a leader’s inability to cultivate a healthy ego that rejoiced with followers even if they should outshine him/her. Leaders must be continually aware that the development of leadership qualities in students, teachers, and parents is not an affront to their authority.

Simon and Angela reminded school leaders that without a healthy ego and a robust self image, authority could be misused by a refusal to give way for followers to shine. A leader that does not rejoice in the empowerment and growth of followers offers no hope and room for improvement and growth.

Building relationships. Participants were vocal for their views about relationships. They viewed relationships as the lifeblood of all communities. As John explained, “[Relationships] create trust within our student body, with our staff members” (p. 8), and make people more willing to talk about issues or problems within the school. People in communities crave for relationships, and leaders who promote healthy relationships among their followers succeed more easily in getting positive responses and the rewards of cooperation in their administration than those who do not. According to Terese, servant-leadership is all about relationships, and healthy relationships make people happy and comfortable in the school. She further added that part of the reward of such relationships is the willingness of people to contribute their gifts to help and participate in various school activities. Angela stressed that the care and respect the servant-leader exhibits towards followers makes all the difference, because relationships cannot be faked and trust in the insincere leader is quickly lost. She observed:

You know relationships are huge, and when you are out of relationships, your whole world spins, it just doesn’t work. . . . You can just say all you want, and especially if you don’t believe in servant-leadership, people can see through that in a heartbeat. (p. 12)

Commenting on the strengths and values of relationships, John said:

The strengths of relationships is utmost. Relationships are important to building collaboration. They are important to building trust, to building understanding, and they are foundational because . . . if you do not have relationships, there is not that level of trust, there is not that willingness to do, there is not that willingness to

communicate, . . . so that relationship becomes one of the foundational aspects to success within any kind of leadership role. (p. 14)

These comments view relationships as lubricating oil that keeps communities alive to pursue their goals and objectives. For participants however, relationships did not imply a refusal to call people to account where necessary. According to Terese, it is in calling people to be responsible and accountable that they are helped to grow. In communities where healthy relationships exist, constituents easily appreciate and understand situations in which they are called to be responsible and accountable. Participants acknowledged that relationships do not come about without efforts and commitment even though people seem to naturally yearn for them. Relationships require a great amount of work and total commitment. Simon thoughtfully observed:

[Relationships are] a tremendous amount of work. A top-down approach, where you tell everybody what to do, when to do it, how to do it, probably is easier, in that it requires no personal input from your point of view. It requires you not moving outside of yourself and your comfort zone. And top-down approach allows you without developing relationships, to still control, to still direct, and you often do so through authority and through fear, let's face it. . . . We have to be dealing with the spirit that is within each and everyone of us. (p. 18)

Participants' remarks, reflected in Simon's words in the above quotation, is indicative of the fact that, relationships demand the giving of self and some amount of inconvenience and sacrifice. Relationships demand that authority is used well to help the follower develop confidence in him/herself. As well, relationships break down barriers among people, and dissipate the fear of the unknown about others, thus turning difference and diversity into sources of strength rather than division and apprehension. So important are relationships to Denis that he indicated, in his calm and soft-spoken voice that he was not interested in knowing about the academic performance of his daughter from her teacher. His major concern is about the relationship of the teacher with his daughter. For him, a

healthy relationship between daughter and teacher is the best recipe for good academic performance. All participants were of the view that schools deprived of healthy relationships stagnate and the students' success becomes elusive.

Building community. All six participants were of the opinion that, community building is a *sine qua non* for success of a servant-leader, but they did not hesitate to acknowledge that, for relationships, a lot of effort was needed for success in community building. It presents challenges such as misunderstanding of the good intentions of the leader, and the uncooperative attitude of apathetic people. However, such occasional challenges made them better servant-leaders. They viewed detractors as indirectly helping to strengthen their resolve to build stronger school communities, and as openers of vistas to see things from different perspectives.

According to Simon, Gerald, and John, some of the ingredients of community building include the participation of the principal in events such as meals, social activities of staff and students, celebration of successes, moments of joy and pain, graduation ceremonies, and praying and celebrating liturgical activities. Other ingredients include visibility and availability of the leader to teachers, students, parents, and the school community. According to John, concrete efforts at community building initiated by the school chaplain include the introduction of *I love you day*; a day on which both students and staff are encouraged to be extra nice to each other. Simon and Terese not only stressed the importance of community but detailed other ways of building community:

You will not have success in the school without community. And you would not have success in school without kids feeling that they have community with each other. Without parents feeling that they are welcome. . . . And without people feeling that you are listening to them, and empathetic to their particular situation. So when Greenleaf talked about all of those characteristics of servant-leadership, we both know he did not mean them to be taken apart. They are circular in so

many ways. Sometimes you could say triangular and some might be more at base than others. But they all interrelate. You can't pick them separately, and okay, community. I strongly believe that we need to support staff by giving them opportunities to come together. And I am not unwilling to spend money to bring a meal in when it means we can socially be together as a staff. That leads to community. Breaking bread was the best example Jesus ever gave us. (p. 10)

[Community] is essential, because if you do not have community, none of it will work. We are lucky in this community. We have a really good parent community, so not just the kids and our teachers. And they very much support what we are doing in the school. They want us to get kids involved. When we have activities in school they are here. We encourage it. We have a good relationship with everybody, where we try to get members of the community to support each other. One of the things I love about my staff and the people here, when something happens, just like the example of a boy whose mother had died; a number of people who came in to provide support for this young man. And I thought that was amazing. That is what community is about. (p. 2)

Angela and John added that in the Catholic school context, the bedrock of community building is faith in Jesus Christ, and that with faith as the foundation, community building cuts across the different challenging life situations that confront people. Denis passionately expressed the construct as follows:

I think that is what being Catholic is. Building that community. That sense of belonging. That there is a greater purpose to you and it is not just about you. That, there is a larger society out there. . . . Again, we live in a society that really promotes getting ahead, being number one, and often number one is a lonely place to be. Community is about doing for others. Being successful but doing for others, and so, yea, I think servant-leadership is doing that, I mean when you serve others. When you look at any society where there are elders, they are not there for themselves. They are there to build a stronger community. (p. 10)

Denis seemed to view individuals clearly as being more than just themselves. Individuals are building blocks of society, community, and the human race. Continuing this train of thought, Gerald observed that community building is visible everyday in classroom activities, liturgical celebrations, periods of retreat, sharing of food and drink, fundraisers for specific goals, Development and Peace (a charitable organization which aims at improving the living and working conditions of 70 countries around the globe), and many

other extra-curricular activities. Community is also seen through the support staff and students lend to colleagues in events of illness and death. Building community is about life itself and life at its various stages in the school community and lead to growth towards a brighter future for students.

Angela, Denis, Simon, and John noted that stronger community building does not happen without work; inputs are needed. These include: providing appropriate information to the school community, listening to what the school community is saying in order to better serve the community, looking at what the community provides in terms of programs, exploring how the Church is or may be linked to the school community, examining the interests of stake holders within the community, and learning about the fund raising activities of the community. In effect, community building is not possible without the establishment of networks with others.

It entails seeing beyond one's self, acknowledging other people, being sensitive to other people in the community, cultivating an awareness of happenings in one's environment, establishing connections with other people for the pursuance of goals for the success of the school community. Denis summarized this in his observation that community building, in a sense, is an *emotional bank account* where members rely on one another for the support they need to make their existence and that of others meaningful.

Participants understood perseverance as the brainchild of hope. They noted that detractors of community building should not consume the servant-leader's energies, and lead to loss of focus. Servant-leaders should persevere in the positive things that benefit the school community.

Support for one another. All six participants argued that community building in the school becomes more meaningful in light of support from different constituents.

About mutual support in the school context, Angela said:

Because it is the right thing to do. And you are teaching kids the important things of life. Yes, you can have all the money, you can have all the toys, you can have all the whatever position. But it doesn't mean anything if you can't turn around and offer help or support the kid beside you, and staff member beside you. . . . We are forgetting about the poor in spirit, the poor in need, the poor. You know, all of the beatitudes, they are right in front of us. (p. 3)

Angela's comment calls for not neglecting to take notice, and lending support to the weak in their immediate environments. She draws attention to new ways of looking at the beatitudes so that school communities can become better and happier places of learning. Complacency and self sufficiency detract from the strong supporting the weak.

Angela's comment raises practical questions: Are stronger students encouraged to look out for the weak? And are senior students expected to take care of their more junior school mates in the school? Terese happily noted that in her school, support for one another was exhibited among students when they, without being prompted, stood up for one another, especially in situations of injustice towards those most vulnerable among them.

Simon reflected on mutual care and support and asked questions that could be summarized as follows: What can be done to support the staff? How can the school community be better supported by the principal and staff? Are parents' needs regarding the care for their children being fulfilled by the principal and staff? Are parents being listened to and supported in ways that are beneficial to their children's learning? What can the principal and staff do that will bring hope to all in the school community? Is power given to parents through school community councils to make them feel they are

welcome into the school community to voice their opinions? And, are students being supported not only academically but socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, so as to lead to their holistic development?

Denis and Simon understood mutual support as *stewardship* and argued that this involves interacting with people, helping them, and leaving them better than they were. For Gerald, stewardship of each other, is being creative in day-to-day relationships and wanting the best for all in the school community. Upholding entrenched views, to the neglect of innovativeness is detrimental to looking for new ways of support for one another for the growth of the school community.

John, Simon, and Angela indicated that liturgical and charitable activities that bring students together, are part of stewardship from which students learn to support one another. Terese recalled:

One of the things we really promote in this community, . . . is that, we really get kids involved in liturgies, Masses, activities, charitable drives. We do our Christian service. That the kids do volunteer work in the community, they get marks for it. But the intention and important part for them in our community is to do things in the community to help those in our community who are struggling, or are needy, or need assistance and help. That is very important.
(p. 8)

Terese's report, suggests that, through supporting others, students learn to care not only for those closest to them in the school, but also those beyond the borders of their schools. Worshipping together establishes a spiritual bond and galvanizes student support for one another and for their community. According to John, the leader serving as a role model in the various life situations such as social gatherings, church activities, and many others in which community members are involved is also educational.

Compassion for people. Participants seemed to have been inspired by an idea similar to Thompson's (2005) that "Compassion is an important measure of spiritual authenticity, and it's essential to spiritual leadership for whole-system transformation in education" (p. 47). As if they had rehearsed their responses, participants acknowledged the importance of compassion as an additional distinguishing mark of the servant-leader. They acknowledged that through experience over the years, they have learned to cherish compassion as they exercised leadership. Gerald noted that, young teachers do not seem to appreciate the value of compassion at the beginning of their career. Smiling, and as if introspecting, he related his experience with such young teachers who relished rigidity and the application of principles and rules in their dealings with students, but over the years, gradually changed from severity to compassion and flexibility. He observed:

I think my understanding over the years has been that I try to be a little bit more compassionate, instead of rigid. Because in terms of servant-leadership, we have our rules, and we have our regulations, but we also have to care for the students and care for our staff. So because of that I think, I give a little bit more than I used to in terms of my flexibility. . . . So you are compassionate for the children, you are compassionate for the parents, and you have to weigh that against the overall well being of everyone. So as you think about it, you want to do the best for those individuals too. The lost sheep and everything else, and yet you are weighing out the consequences for the entire group. When a person is young, especially I see it in young teachers, if they do not have children. If they have not been through those experiences, the rules are firm and they are not bending whereas here, as you are getting older as you have seen really good kids getting into trouble, you do not just want to send them away, you want to help them get out of that trouble. (p. 3)

Gerald cited his own father's change from rigidity to flexibility and compassion as he advanced in years in his leadership career as a principal. This suggests that experience is a factor in the development of compassion in a servant-leader. Gerald seemed to suggest that the goal of the servant-leader is not to 'lay ambush' for the faults and mistakes of their students or teachers, but to understand their weaknesses and help them develop and

grow. John concurred, and as if reflecting on his past experiences thoughtfully provided the following reflection:

[Servant-leadership] has given me an increased understanding of people. . . . I think it gives me a sense of trying to respect all people, work for all people, and ensure that my dealings with people are going to be fair, upfront, ethical, and technical, and honest, I guess in terms of the approach. I think when you are dealing with students in particular, what it does is, it gives me an opportunity to maintain more of a levelheaded, to be able to be passionate and compassionate, and be empathetic with the situation that has happened and to work with that student to try and overcome the different things, different problems within their lives. I think if you take a look at an individual that you are working with, there have been a number of family situations that are going on in this individual's life that helped to complicate that life. So you try to be fair in terms of how you are going to work with this student. So you talk with the teachers to let them know the plight of this particular individual, to create a sense of empathy for that individual so that they themselves can then give some benefits to this individual to help them succeed. It gives them an opportunity to increase the adaptations that might be needed for the student because of the problems that he or she may be having or experiencing. (p. 4)

This comment suggests that it is by being in relationship with people that the leader develops the necessary qualities needed to help followers reach their potentials. Angela pointed out that a misunderstanding of compassion could lead to the erroneous conclusion that the servant-leader allows students, parents, and the school community to dictate the direction of the school, as if the servant-leader was a puppet condemned to react to situations with no ability to give directions. Laughing as she spoke, Angela said:

Servant-leadership does not mean you are easy-going or always holding hands and singing kumbaya, everything will be good. No, sometimes you have to make hard decisions. And you do it with love and respect always at the base. Because if it is done in anger, you can't do that. Servant-leadership does not mean you are a milk toast. It is not that you do not do things to hurt people, you try and do the best you can . . . but always done with the right base. And I guess we always come back. What is the real reason we are doing this? (p. 19)

For the participants, servant-leadership in the school context was not a *laissez-faire* leadership style that seeks to please everybody, but rather that compassion made the

servant-leader seek to understand situations before acting so as to see how he/she can best help the students, teachers and parents. Angela, Denis, and Gerald cited the biblical story of Jesus and the adulterous woman in John 8: 1-11 as an example of compassion in which Jesus did not just end up showing compassion, but he asked the accused woman to take responsibility for her action and grow through that. Denis and Simon observed that though, the interest of students was paramount, this did not mean doing things to please them whether they are wrong or not. Terese explained that there are lines which students, teachers, and parents do not have to cross, but these lines needed to be drawn in the sand. People must be made to take responsibility for their actions, but respectfully, and must be made to see hope beyond the seeming gloom.

Servant-Leadership as Manifested and Experienced by Catholic High School

Principals in their Daily Professional Lives

This section which deals with the results of research question three is divided into two parts. Part one, further sub-divided into three parts, explores participants' views of how their servant-leadership role is manifest in their daily professional lives. Part two sub-divided into two parts, examines respondents' experiences of their servant-leadership role.

Servant-Leadership as Manifest in Participants' Daily Professional Lives

The results reveal that servant-leadership is manifest in the daily professional lives of participants in three main ways: multiple ways of dealing with situations, the trust of students, staff, and parents, and collaborative leadership.

Multiple ways of dealing with situations. Simon, Gerald, and John indicated that the servant-leadership style provides them with many possibilities of dealing with the

unpredictable situations that arise from their interactions with students, staff, and parents. It implies utilizing different ways of helping students, staff members, or parents. In explaining the *modus operandi* of his ways, Gerald said, “We will not have to give up on somebody. They will have to give up on themselves” (p. 10). The onus is always put on the constituent to respond positively or not. Evidence participants listed for success were; intractable students changing for the better and successfully graduating from school, and the positive change in attitude of teachers who initially experienced problems in their relationships with students. Servant-leadership offers no blue prints, only the way of viewing a situation at hand and of helping the individual to respond. This way of looking at individuals, perceives the hope servant-leadership gives as a bait that is freely thrown to the individual, and the person has the freedom to be attracted to it or not.

Trust of students, staff, and parents. Angela, Denis, and Terese happily noted that in their practice, the traditional perception of the principal as boss who expelled students from school for misconduct had become a thing of the past. Furthermore, the attitude by which the principal was the last person to be made aware of a student’s misbehavior or inappropriate conduct had also changed. Students now understand that the principal’s first objective in the school was not to punish people for wrongdoing, but to promote student’s interests and welfare. Denis explained:

I remember a girl coming in and saying that she wanted to get off of drugs. That is pretty powerful when a kid will come in to an administrator and say, *I need help*. And as an administrator, I could help a lot more than I could as a classroom teacher. So it gives me the power in a positive sense. (p. 2)

This interaction between Denis and a student depends on the trust and honesty servant-leadership engenders between leaders and constituents. The practice also promotes a

spirit of openness in relationships between the principal, students, and staff, further unlocking possibilities for growth. Terese and Angela respectively put it this way:

[At the beginning of every academic year] . . . teachers write a little bit about what their plans are for the year. It is a very informal kind of thing recounting things that have gone on in their lives. And I have just been reading them last week or so from my staff. And how open and honest they are with me! They tell me stuff that they would have never told me four years ago, five years ago when I started out here. There is an openness and honesty. And people come to me and tell me stuff that are happening in their lives, that can impact good and bad what is going on in their job here. And I guess to me that is one of the rewards for me. (p. 5)

You can't assume just because you are the principal, people will trust you. And it usually takes people a little bit, a while Our past experiences with our leaders as principals have been very formal, . . . I would never come to a principal in the old days to tell them what was going on in my life. . . . Now, it seems to be a little bit more open, . . . now many of our principals just can't work that way anymore. (p. 13)

These comments exemplify the admirable trust between these participants and their teachers and may be attributable to the servant-leadership role of participants in their schools. Simon and John however, pointed out that, being new to their schools, they were not yet enjoying the level of trust they relished in their previous schools, but were confident that with their practice of servant-leadership, they would win the trust of teachers in their new schools. However, it is well known that trust needs to be earned, and requires time and patience. Furthermore, authority is no guarantee for the enjoyment of trust from followers. Gaining trust depends on the care the leader manifests towards followers. Additionally, the measuring criterion for trust of the leader is the willingness of followers to be open to talking about their private and personal joys and difficulties with their leader.

For Terese and Gerald, the fact that some parents confide about negative behavioral tendencies of their children to them demonstrates their trust in them. This

confidence of parents in them reflects the influence of their servant-leadership role in their school communities.

Collaborative leadership. According to participants, the changing context of the school landscape (Renihan, 2002) demands a collaborative leadership style that promotes mutual respect and support. They believed that their adoption of collaborative leadership has had a positive impact on their schools. Angela explained:

On our wall right now, we are going through great change this year with the building of Siloam high school. . . . So huge, huge change that way. And so that helps you, allowing staff to come together and say what are we going to do to make this place the best it can be? This year we had 25 people- teachers, secretaries, teacher assistants sit on a committee to review what we are going to do at St. Jerome. And they have come out with phenomenal ideas that are all based on better things for kids, and better things for teachers. We have come up with a new mission vision, we have thought about it. Our theme now is *we belong to the St. Jerome family who I am makes a difference* and that is what we are believing in. (p. 7)

Angela indirectly proffers advice to leaders that collaboration is useful for tapping the rich potentials of followers. The respect she accorded the ideas of the various committees in her school led to a stronger school community, and enhanced staff engagement in the affairs and activities of the school.

Angela, Simon, Denis, and Gerald felt that servant-leadership can on occasions become burdensome because of the long and occasionally circuitous process of arriving at decisions. Angela called the long procedure of arriving at decisions “process” and cautioned that, skipping the *process* defeats all that collaboration and community building represent. Terese and Gerald intimated that *process* enhanced the openness of staff and students towards them. Gerald observed:

Well, I think one of the leadership styles, I can mention again is just the top-down, the disciplinarian. I am not sure of the exact one where basically you tell everyone what should happen. That is not a good leadership style, because very

seldom do you get people on board. With the servant-leadership style, you also allow people to grow and you can't be afraid to have other people with certain strengths do things better than you. At least that is how I look at it. With the disciplinarian or top-down leadership style, you have to be the boss; you have to be in charge of everything. And I think with servant-leadership, you have to allow people to grow and develop and take the leadership roles. (p. 4)

The above comment suggests that over-controlling leadership possibly breeds reluctant followers who are unwilling to contribute to the leadership of their communities, whereas collaborative leadership creates an atmosphere for the growth of confident future leaders. Participants agreed that the servant-leader is prone to occasional mistakes like everybody else, but humility propels him/her into honestly acknowledging them. Their ability to tender apologies to staff and students when appropriate manifested that they did not pretend to be perfect. Angela addressed this issue of apology:

We work through it, and try and find a way of reaching them. And sometimes it is in our busyness that we do not stop and think, no, I am going about this the wrong way. And so sometimes the reflection after the student has walked out, or a staff member has walked out, you go (holds the head). I blew that. What am I going to do to make that connection better? And sometimes it is just coming back and address, and I have absolutely done this. I have pulled a kid back in or a staff member back in and said 'I apologize let's start all over again'. I have done that a few times. . . . I have called them in and said let's start again, and I go through the 'Hello my name is Mrs. Angel. Or hello my name is Angela. I am glad to meet you. Can you tell me about yourself and we start again?' And for many people, that helped. (p. 5)

Analysis of the above quotation raises a contentious issue. Should a leader apologize to constituents in situations whatsoever? The participants of this study believe in the leader apologizing to followers where necessary, as they perceive that as a sign of humility and strength. Recounting their experiences, the participants of this study believed that their ability to apologize to students or staff when they had treated them unfairly, helped create an atmosphere of credibility, trust, and mutual respect in the school community.

Denis said that setting a good example is a powerful way of eliciting the collaboration of students and that, if the leader needs help, he/she must be able to demonstrate that he/she is ready to help others too. He observed:

It is easy to ask for help when your staff knows you are willing to help them. And I think that is what community is. When you look at any sense of community, it is the willingness to get involved, it is the willingness to stand up for your neighbour, and it is the willingness to pray for people. It is all about being there for somebody else, and I think as a servant-leader you are seen as being there all the time for other people. With that emotional bank account, it is so easy to ask for help, when they recognize that nine times out of ten you are going to be there to help them. So if I go into the commons, the cafeteria and I ask for four kids to help me come and unload something, well, if they have seen me helping people unload stuff and coming into classrooms and talk to kids, and help staff, kids wouldn't say NO. Kids will go help, staff will jump up and come and help, and because that is the atmosphere we are setting. I have worked for administrators who did not follow that model, that were very dictatorial, and people just did not want to get involved. It is like, let them do it. If you are a helpful person you will be surrounded with people who will want to help you. (p. 14)

The leader's encouragement, appreciation, support, personal contacts with constituents, and trust, enhance collaboration in the school community. Avoidance of public reprimands and confrontation so as to help an individual look forward rather than concentrating on past mistakes can elicit collaboration from constituents. Simon expressed this idea as follows:

The best approach is, I believe we have, encouragement, appreciation, notes of support, notes of thanks. . . . Avoiding only reprimanding when things have gone wrong. Personal conversation. Not public confrontation. The biggest, developing trust. When people trust you, and you are who you preach, then personal conversations with teachers and with students have a greater effect on those individuals. (p. 16)

Participants' advised that where blame seems to be the inevitable antidote for correcting mistakes, fear and timidity gradually become the insidious norm. Denis, Terese, and John, like Simon, believed that no one in the school community is too

insignificant to converse with, because good conversation boosts the image of students, staff members, and parents.

Angela indicated that having a clear vision is important in eliciting collaboration, but the vision needs to be supported by constituents. She observed, “It is important to have a vision, but that vision must be supported and encouraged by those around you” (p. 18). Thus, collaboration implies the need for the inputs of others and mutual support within the school community, and calls for *listening* without which collaboration is impossible. All participants agreed that listening is difficult to cultivate and requires a lot of patience.

Reflecting on the need for mutual support and innovativeness as some of the essential recipes for the success of a leader’s vision, Gerald explained that while it is the leader’s task to inspire vision, it needs acceptance by the community because “It is the community’s vision of the school” (p. 15). John concurred:

I think you need to ensure that your vision is set within your school and within what you do within that school. You need to see and focus on that vision through your goals. By establishing your goals, you hopefully meet the needs of individuals and groups within your community. (p. 8)

This comment underscores the facts that a vision that bears no relevance to its context serves no purpose, and that a vision that fulfills the needs of the community implies *community building*. Participants’ comments on vision raises the question: *vision from whom and for what purpose?*

In their practice of servant-leadership, through caring, gentleness, empathy, compassion, and service, participants felt that they have maintained their school communities. Positive comments from students, staff members, and parents about their leadership style, their encouragement of team work, approachability, ability to establish

positive relationships, credibility, trust, and words of appreciation from parents of formerly obdurate students, were evidence of the effects of their servant-leadership role.

Catholic High School Principals Experience of their Role as Servant-Leaders

The general feeling of participants was that of satisfaction with their role as servant-leaders and of having more positive than negative experiences. Angela expressed her satisfaction as follows:

Everyday. And again, when I see a teacher I have worked with succeed, or try something new. When they come in and say 'Oh I want you to see what I did in school today, what I did with my kids. What do you think of this?' I have been able to say phenomenal! Fantastic! Or when a kid comes in who had a really rotten year, and the next year you see, my goodness the kid again! The kid blossoms, because we all grow, it is never giving in, guess never giving up, on a kid or person. And knowing that they are going to get better, they will get better, they will evolve they will become stronger. (p. 6)

John expressed his at more length:

Very simple things, to begin with. Getting a thank you from a student, or from a staff member. Or having a former student come back and say 'thank you.' You provided me with a great deal of opportunity. You set a tone, you set an example for me. You have helped me accomplish this. Having a parent come to you and say, you know what? 'I am so appreciative of the fact that you worked with my son or daughter and got him/her involved in such and such a program. It has been such a benefit to them. And it has provided them with a great experience. It has provided them with a large or super educational experience down the road. It has kind of been the foundation for their success in their educational endeavors.' Seeing success within your school, in terms of the data that you collect. Seeing kids that might be failing a class or 2 or 3 may be failing one or not failing at all. Seeing a smile on a face as you greet them in the morning. You have some fun and discussion with them in the classroom or in the hall way. It is working with teachers and seeing some kind of Aha moments come from them that help them to work within the context of their curriculum or to help with their particular child that might be struggling with something. It is working together as a leadership team within the school. (p. 3)

The positive undertone of hope in the above comments is overwhelming, although hope belongs to both the *obedient* and the *prodigal child* it is often the prodigal child that needs hope most, just like Jesus abandoning the 99 sheep to go in search of the stray one

(Lk. 15:1- 7). A further implication of the above comment is that servant-hood in leadership is the way to unleash the power of hope in a school community.

Additional evidence of the provision of hope comes during periods of bereavement, and when students see their school as a safe place, and additionally, when there is a change in attitude of teachers from insensitive rigidity to empathy and understanding for students. Participants described these situations as follows:

I guess an example I would have is an example of a young boy whose mother died unexpectedly, and . . . his dad came and told him. And I came in and the boy was really upset, he was crying. This is not fair, this is not fair, and all the people who came in to talk to this boy and offer him support and say a prayer with him, to give him a hug, to talk to him, and let him know that he had a lot of support and that people cared about him and were going to look out for him. To me that kind of giving is the kind of thing that comes out of practicing servant-leadership. (Terese, p. 3)

. . . I think teaching at St. Mark where we had a kid who lived in a car, for I think ten days, lived in a car, but never missed school. He run away from home, we didn't know it. He was living in a car, but he kept coming to school because we were a safe place for him. (Denis; p. 7)

You know, a teacher who had been very autocratic in his classes, really exceptionally hard on kids at times. I have really encouraged him to look at the good things kids do. To be positive with kids, instead of seeking out what they do wrong. Talk to kids about what they are doing right, and encourage positive kinds of attitudes. In the last two years, far fewer problems in his classroom. Rarely sends students down. I have not had a parent complain in two years about him. Which I would have probably if I totaled up the complaints I got about this teacher would be that much of all the other teachers put together. So to me that is a huge thing. It is helping somebody to look at things from a more positive light. And to realize that if you look for the good in people, that is what you get. (Terese, p. 6)

The three examples referred to above, point to participants' unassuming recognition of the effects of their role as servant-leaders. What can be more fulfilling than for a leader to know that members of his/her community support each other not only in good times but in difficult periods? It must be a sign of success if a student sees his/her school as a safe

place to be? And a principal must rejoice to see a change in the attitude of a teacher who enjoys working in his/her school community. In short, that is hope which servant-leadership provides.

Participants agreed on having experienced growth through their practice of servant-leadership. The discussions with them raised the questions: (a) How can a leader give hope to people without understanding and acknowledging that they are not *finished products*? (b) How can a leader give hope to people without appreciating diversity in the way they view situations? These questions were in John's words:

I think it has given me an understanding that when you are working with people, people are not perfect. People are not necessarily the same type of character. They do not have the same type of characteristics or quality, qualities that you may have. But there is a diverse aspect of leadership. I think there is a diverse aspect within community. And you need to understand that diversity so that you can work with those individuals to get the best out of them for the community. (p. 8)

As servant-leaders, participants acquired increase in patience, a better understanding of people. Participants further seemed to indicate that servant-leadership has helped them develop a spirituality of prayer. For example, Terese and John took their Catholic faith more seriously through involvement in their church communities as lectors at liturgical celebrations, members of parish boards, and participation in parish activities.

Respondents also experienced challenges, disappointments, and burdens by the disappointment of those who refuse to accept the servant-leadership style.

Challenges, tensions, and costs of servant-leadership. According to Mortensen (2008), "It does not matter who you are; you will be tested" (p. 269). Participants identified the self as a challenge. Simon indicated that, he occasionally had difficulty moving away from the ego because, "It is easier to consider yourself first. . . . It is easier to fall back into the ego-centric mode. . . . self first, not last" (p. 15). He found servant-

leadership becoming more frustrating when it was difficult to work within the mandate of servant-leadership because of the self.

The failure of people to take up the challenge of empowerment was sometimes worrying as well as their misunderstanding of the meaning of servant-leadership. For Denis, exhibiting compassion could be wrongly judged as weakness and indecision. And such wrong opinions sometimes unfortunately become descriptive of the unsuspecting leader's leadership role. Gerald said that difficulties sometimes arise when non-Catholic students try to go back on their undertaking to be respectful of Catholic teachings and Faith that was made before admission to the school. There were occasions when patience did not yield the desired results, and a student needed to be guided to relocate to another school. For Simon, such situations made it difficult to sleep at night because of the nagging as to whether the best decision had been taken. Angela indicated that on a number of occasions, she has had to deal with dilemmas. She observed:

. . . huge demands with kids, who are struggling. What do we do with them? Do we give up on them? Do we send them away? Do we try and help? Staff dilemmas and people who do not believe in what we are doing. (p. 17)

On his part, Gerald pointed out circumstances where he bore the anger of parents to protect a teacher who was being wrongly judged by members of the school community. John added another challenge:

I think one of the things that I have come across is, when I first became a principal, a servant-leader, you step into a situation where you have a very strong staff that is entrenched in the way they deliver education. And that delivery of education may not necessarily be in line with what servant-leadership is: meeting the needs of all kids within the school. And I think that is a challenge in itself that if you are trying to instill the ideal or vision within the staff it takes time. (p. 9)

It became clear that challenges arise from teachers who take immutable positions regarding their ways of viewing and doing things. Administrative superiors can also

present a problem. Terese pointed out that infrequently, she had yielded to pressure from administrative superiors because of her gentle servant-leadership approach. The five other participants thought that even though this example was a possibility, it was very rare, because their administrative superiors espoused the servant-leadership model themselves, and generally seemed to agree with their way of exercising leadership.

As to how they balanced personal convictions with those of the school system, the following comments were elicited:

I would hope my convictions are not that different from the school system? I really feel that way because we go through our expectations not just as a teacher, but also as a Catholic system because to me I think there is a little bit more to it than just being a teacher. There is more to it because it is based on our belief, our faith conviction of supporting one another. To be honest it is hard, it is really, but I always have to remember, what is the focus here? It is the kid. The kids.
(Angela, p. 14)

In many ways the demands of the school system parallel servant-leadership. So it is not that big a struggle. The expectation of our senior administration is that we would be servant-leaders, and so the question might be better, balancing servant-leadership with the realities of our school system. I think you can still make decisions using the model of servant-leadership. At the end of the day you still have to make a decision whether to do something. . . . Whether it is sending a student away, which we do not do very often. Whether it is talking to the teacher from a supervisory point of view, which we do not do very often. So I guess part of it is, on the whole, the way we do things is not in conflict with servant-leadership. (Denis, p. 15)

Well, we are fortunate in my opinion as administrators, to work as administrators in the Catholic school system. And when I say that I mean it is a system where servant-leadership had been discussed, and promoted. You know I would not be honest with you if I said that that approach has always been taken. . . . So my personal conviction has always been to work with people, and I mean it is very rewarding. And I feel I am privileged to work within a system where I truly believe that that same adage is spoken, and that the same adage is encouraged within the entire system. (Simon, p. 15)

Participants seemed to agree that there is a focus for their leadership which they do not have to miss. The objective of the focus is not a secret in the Catholic school system. And even though that objective is not easy to attain, concentrating on the purpose helps them

in the fulfillment of their mandate as Catholic high school principals. The general impression was that participants' convictions generally reflected the school system's expectations of them as servant-leaders. If there were occasional disagreements with their administrative superiors, these were the exceptions. In general, participants agreed that in adopting the servant-leadership style, even though arrival at decisions sometimes went at snail pace, it was the better and more fulfilling leadership style that worked best in their schools.

A desire to serve a school community to the best of one's ability could lead to neglect of one's family. Gerald and John felt that the leader needs to balance their duties to their school communities with providing quality time to their families. Gerald (p. 12) explained as follows:

I believe one of the costs is that . . . sometimes [you] could be a burden on your family and put strains on your family situation whereas you are always giving to others. And sometimes, as a servant-leader, you forget that you also have to not only give, you also have to give in the school situation. You have to give at home, and give to other family members, and give in other locations rather than doing your job all so consuming. You cannot do everything. So you have to pick and choose. And as I say to everyone, 'if your family falls apart, then you are not good at work' So you have to take care of your faith, you take care of your family, and work hard at what is going on at school. But that can be so consuming that you forget about the other important things in your life. (p. 12)

Gerald's comment echoes the biblical admonition from Timothy 3: 4-5 that the *leader* needs to manage his/her family well in order to be able to serve the people of God.

John emphasized the servant-leader's need to pay attention to his/her own health, and suggested ways of doing this: ". . . [it] can be a number of different things. . . . It could be participating in exercises, fitness plans, yoga, meditation. . . . It could be athletic events, whatever you want" (p. 12). Analysis of John's observation indicates that the school leader who considers him/herself a servant-leader has also the responsibility not

only to model hard work and care for people, but also to show the good example of maintaining good health, because the frail health of the servant-leader implies decreased service to the community.

Strategies for Success in Servant-Leadership

As this chapter draws to a close, it is appropriate to offer a section that discusses few of the strategies the participants of this study have adopted for success in their role as servant-leaders. Being a leadership style that seeks the growth of followers, there is a need for useful strategies in order that the leader might galvanize the energies of all into building a strong community.

Miscellaneous Strategies for Success in Servant-Leadership

Participants emphasized that tenacity of purpose is paramount if the servant-leader is to achieve success. The leader needs to demonstrate that he/she cares and cherishes collaboration. Showing respect for constituents helps to build their trust and energizes them to work harder. Both the male and female participants identified similar strategies, for success. The only difference however is, while the females concentrated on effacing themselves to help followers, the males dwelt on concrete steps they had adopted to succeed as servant-leaders. The following excerpts present these views:

Just keep doing it. . . . and to remind them [students] that I see myself as a parent figure. (Denis, p. 16)

I do not think I am the center of the universe. I do not think it is about me. That it is okay to ask for help, it is not a sign of weakness, and it is, if you ask for help you need to give it back. I do not expect everything to be given to me, I do not, I think I have to earn it. (Angela, p. 16)

The best approach is I believe we have, encouragement, appreciation, notes of support, notes of thanks. Checking students doing things right. Avoiding only reprimanding when things have gone wrong. Personal conversation. Not public confrontation. The biggest, developing trust. When people trust you, and you are

who you preach, then personal conversations with teachers and with students have a greater effect on those individuals. (Simon, p. 16)

The above excerpts suggest that tenacity of purpose is necessary if the servant-leader wants to succeed. Concentrating on discouragement is comparable to planning to fail. As well, the leader must be humble enough to ask for help from followers as he/she cannot do the job alone. Additionally, the leader should not hesitate to express appreciation to constituents as that is a good recipe for building trust. As if he had conferred with Simon, John recapitulated some of Simon's ideas and added an idea from Angela, indicating that recognizing the success of followers goes a long way to elicit further contributions from them for a better and strong school community:

You want to acknowledge the successes from simple things like a thank you, well done, to a letter or note citation of recognition of thanks to an award or special recognition. There are a number of different things. But I think that also helps to focus that it is not about you. It is about serving those individuals and recognizing that success, because that success, if recognized can also lead to continuous success to getting what you need to do and where you need to get to. (John, 13)

Terese, speaking in general terms, and with reference to listening and empathy said the following:

I think it is just the way I deal with people. It is just learning to listen to people, to hear what they have to say, to hear their story because sometimes they are upset about something, and you do not even see it as something they should be upset about. So learning to listen to what they have to say, and trying to understand what it is about the situation that makes them unhappy. And understanding that you cannot control the way people feel, and even though the intent is not to make a person upset, they still are upset. And so acknowledging that they are upset, and that it is okay that they are upset. And so for me, developing the sense of empathy and the ability to listen is probably one of the things I have had to work on most as an administrator. It is just being quiet and listening. I always try to solve everybody's problem, and that is not my job, and I should not be doing that. So I have learned to be quiet and listen, because, in the story telling, most people solve it themselves, and it is a better way anyway. (p. 13)

The above comment seems to present listening as an art that needs to be learned, because it is through listening well to followers' stories that they can be better helped. Apart from the emphasis placed on the importance of listening and empathy, an underlying suggestion is that, the leader should not single-handedly arrogate the solution to people's problems to him/herself. Because, as Terese and Gerald observed, as people tell their own stories, they quite often arrive at solving their own problems.

Summary of the Findings from Semi-Structured Interviews

Participants attributed the origins of their notions of servant-leadership to their, parents, siblings, early childhood upbringing, directors, former principals, professional colleagues, school division policies, and priests. Most gave major credit to their families, especially citing their mothers as inspiring sources. A plausible implication of the positive family influences on participants is that other future interactions that brought their servant-leadership qualities into full bloom could be compared to the image of a viable seed lying in a fertile soil in wait for rain. And just as their families and people with whom they interacted gave them hope in leadership, they in turn wished to be beacons of hope for others. The opportunity to coach sporting activities and parenting served as additional sources of the notions of servant-leadership for some participants.

All participants stated unequivocally that their devotion to the development and future of children, and their faith in Jesus Christ were the foundation of their notions of servant-leadership. They viewed the school as the environment in which faith played an immense role in their interactions with staff, students, parents, and the school community at large, and were constantly challenged by the question "What would Jesus do?"

Respondents felt honored, and privileged, for the opportunity given them in Catholic high schools to express their faith on a daily basis. They were determined to work to the best of their ability to make their schools happy, joyful, faith-filled academic communities where students and staff achieve their potentials, and they intended making parents happy that their children were being well served. They used as metaphors for servant-leadership altruism, caring for others, living by example, and the unselfish desire to serve others. They emphasized the need for patience to respectfully care for and treat all in the school community with equity.

Analysis of the data revealed that participants distanced themselves from a leadership approach that is far removed from the needs of followers. They understood servant-leadership as an enabling leadership style that is follower-centered, relationship-bound, and uplifting to followers. In addition, they recognized servant-leadership as an ongoing process for nurturing students and helping them to mature. They were committed to empowering and helping followers develop their capacities.

They recognized the importance of relationships for community building, and saw as one of their greatest responsibilities, supporting all in the school community so that all could support each other. It was also the perception of participants that compassion was important when occasional failures occurred with a staff member, student, or parent, and awareness helped in eliciting compassion from the servant-leader guiding the follower towards growth.

Exploration of the definitions participants provided for servant-leadership suggested that they understood the implications of the servant-leadership model and viewed this leadership approach as most effective if exercised through the persuasion of

personal example, altruism, self sacrifice, empowerment of others, care for the interest and growth of others, and grooming followers to become leaders themselves. In addition, participants expressed that effective servant-leadership involves moving away from one's self, in order to truly represent the idea of service for others by living one's faith through one's work within the school community.

Participants identified the effectiveness of their servant-leadership in (a) the trust placed in them by students, staff, and parents, and manifested as openness in formal and in private matters. And, (b) healthy responses from students, staff, and parents, exhibited in their taking up leadership roles for the good of their school communities.

They enjoyed growth of their staff in terms of leadership initiatives and community building efforts, and also in their own growth in patience, better understanding of people, and involvement in their church communities. Participants recognized that their ego sometimes constituted a challenge by creating inner tension that hindered their servant-leadership. They were sometimes challenged by the inability of people to take up the challenge of empowerment. Respondents seemed to appreciate the slow process of servant-leadership in arriving at decisions because it created a better school climate than a top-down autocratic quick-fix approach.

Respondents identified a number of strategies they had adopted for success in their roles as servant-leaders. Tenacity of purpose, respect for members of the school community, cherishing collaboration, caring for constituents, avoidance of unnecessary reprimands in situations of failure, developing trust in followers were some of the strategies suggested. Caveats for the committed leader includes balancing the time

demands of servant-leadership in school with those of one's family, and making time for physical exercises to maintain good health.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATION OF OBSERVATION DATA

I started the observation phase of the study in the second week of September, 2008 through the second week of October, 2008. The reason for my collection of the observation data during these periods was my assumption that, like all principals, Catholic high school principals are confronted with most of their administrative challenges during the early months of the new school year. The determining criteria for my choice of participants to observe were based on gender, location of their schools, time since interview completion with the participant, richness of data, and participant's willingness to be observed. I immersed myself, for two weeks each, into the worlds of two participants (one male and one female). The length of the daily observations ranged from a few hours to complete school days, and was mostly determined by the diversity of activities on any day.

In the current chapter, I first provide a description of the schools wherein the observation participants held position of principal. To help the reader better appreciate the context of the research, the description of the schools will be immediately followed by a description of a day in the life of each of the two participants exemplifying their daily servant-leadership behaviors. I judged the two days chosen to be richest in terms of data in comparison to the other days during the observation period. Participants' work on the two selected days is described and expanded upon, revealing emerging servant-

leadership themes. Second, through analyzing the data of the two days chosen in the life of the two participants together with the data of the entire observation period, I report some major servant-leadership themes that complement and elaborate the themes identified in the interview data.

St. Jerome High School (Principal Angela)

This grade nine to twelve school is housed in a rather non-descript building dating from the 1960s to serve the needs of the Catholic community on the west side of Dog City. In comparison to other parts of the city, the west side is generally considered to be economically disadvantaged. This economic disadvantage is often reflected in the different problems associated with students from low economic backgrounds. The building is situated in the middle of a residential area composed of low cost housing for low income earners. Occasional incidences of violence that sometimes plague the west side of Dog City causes anxiety as, reportedly, some people are afraid to come to the school at night for activities. The two storey building has a basement and three different stair cases to go up to the second floor. One elevator serves as an additional way to go to the second floor. According to the school authorities, the number of ways to go up and down the school building makes supervision difficult. Most staff and students have a strong attachment towards their school which they fondly describe *as home*. Despite its age, and the annual spring flooding of the basement, the building is well kept by the school's hardworking caretakers.

Established as a help to parents in the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of their children, the school's goal is the creation and sustenance

of a school community enlivened by the Gospel. This was reflected by the large number of crucifixes on the walls of the school corridors and classrooms.

This French, Eastern European bilingual high school, is dedicated to providing its students with the opportunity of gaining fluency in both official languages. An additional language taught at St. Jerome is Cree. Instructional programs include woodworking, cooking, and computer classes. The school is also celebrated for its alternate programs for students with special needs, and its volunteer work with participants of the Special Olympics program. In St. Jerome, 35% of the student population comes from over ten different cultural and language backgrounds, thus providing a real mix of a *family* with diversity of races. The school has 69 teachers, 30 support staff, and 710 students. The large student and staff population implies heavy administrative responsibilities for the principal of the school.

Two main entrances on the eastern side, forming the main doorway of the building sandwich the offices of the principal and the secretarial staff. On entering the building through the right side entrance, straight ahead, and on the adjacent wall, showcases display trophies of past and present sporting and academic achievements of the school on both school and provincial levels. On the wall to the right, as one faces the showcases, is a crucifix flanked by beautiful portraits of a former and present Bishop of Dog City diocese. Hanged on the left wall of the main entrance on the right, is a portrait of Pope Benedict XVI. Further along the left wall, are pictures of six former principals of St. Jerome. The two main entrances lead onto a walkway running north to south in the main building.

On entering through the left main entrance, one sees trophies displayed in showcases on the adjacent wall similar to the trophies exhibited as one enters through the right main entrance. The conspicuous difference, however, is a sculpture of Jesus the Good Shepherd hanging on the wall. Behind the left wall, as one faces the trophies, are the offices of students' services coordinator, counselors, school plus coordinator, and home liaison worker.

A door way opening through the right wall as one goes through the left main entrance leads to the offices of the financial secretary, assistant principals, accounts clerk, attendance clerk, school nurse, police liaison, and the social worker. From the main hallway running north to south, is the door to the principal's office, and it was well known to students and staff, that when that door was open, and there was nobody with the principal, anyone was welcome to enter. The secretaries would welcome and direct students, staff, parents, and visitors to the principal. On the bulletin board on one wall of the principal's office are words which seem to set the tone of the principles guiding the principal in her administration of the school. Some of those words are: *accept differences, be kind, express thanks, harm no one, jettison anger, open your mind, plan mightily, master something, reciprocate, love truly.*

The school has two gymnasias (large and small attached to each other) that are not reserved for only sporting activities, but are multipurpose, and therefore serve as places for large school gatherings, and inviting venues for students to meet, chat, and socialize. The students' library, much frequented by students, is situated on the northern part of the first floor and has over 30 computers arranged along the northern, western, and southern walls, with another row of computers running through the middle. On the walls of the

library are beautiful paintings of various sceneries of the province of Saskatchewan's blue sky and horizon.

The school chapel indicating a presence of prayer life in the school, and located upstairs, is a well decorated room with inviting seats that seem to attract even the curious visitor to prayer. Classrooms are mainly located on the second floor with the doorways of the classrooms mostly made conspicuous by the occasional discontinuity in the beautifully painted rows of lockers running along the walls facing each other in the corridors upstairs. A staff room, unable to seat all staff at the same time, is located on the second floor. Here, the staff eats lunch, socialize, and discusses matters of interest. It also serves as a gathering place for staff to meet and pray on Monday mornings before the start of school.

The school's website, points out three major strengths St. Jerome school, a friendly Christian atmosphere created by staff and students, acceptance of students and staff no matter what their ethnicity or socio-economic background is, and willingness of staff to accommodate all individuals with diverse needs within the school. Areas that needed attention were identified as: meeting the diverse needs of students' poverty, at risk behavioral issues, declining enrolment, and the location of the school amidst the violence within the community.

Community building was promoted by: sporting programs similar to those of city high schools including golf, drama in the fall, a dance group called Whispering Winds, an Aboriginal drum group highlighting a particular theme per month through food, dance, and song. World Travel Clubs – Ukraine, France, Japan, and Italy, open gym open at noon hours, open ESL room at noon hours, self esteem groups – male and female, Martial

arts club, Youth Action Circle, Urban unity – Break dance/ Hip Hop Group, Breakfast and Lunch programs.

A School Day in the Life of Angela (September 15, 2008)

8.10AM

Angela arrived at school at 8.10 am and with her pleasant infectious smile, greeted students in the corridors as she proceeded to her office. Students responded with broad smiles as she passed by. She entered her office and made ready for morning prayers with the staff in the staff room. Staff attendance at morning prayers was not mandatory. On entering the staff room, she exchanged greetings and pleasantries with the 15 staff members present, asked how they were doing, and as if in a chorus, the answer was, “good”. Angela’s contagious and ebullient demeanor seemed to infect the staff members assembled for prayers. Angela started the prayers by inviting staff members to present their prayer intentions. These focused on students and their families, friends, and absentee staff members. At the end, Angela wished everybody success at their day’s work. Staff members joyfully responded with a similar wish for her. This prayer session corroborates the interview data about the importance of prayer in the Catholic school community. Furthermore, prayer seems to be the inevitable sign of community building and for mutual support. The sense of community exhibited through praying is not only for those physically present, but also for those in the school community who needed support. It demonstrates that the school community is always bigger than the people physically present in the school building.

8.30AM

Before returning to her office, Angela characteristically made a quick tour of the school, first on the second floor and then on the first. As she toured the school, she exchanged greetings with both students and staff, stopping every now and then to chat with them. She seemed to connect with both staff and students. Observing her, it was clear she is gifted with a spontaneous attitude of welcoming them with an *infectious* smile which they readily responded to. The general movement of teachers and students into their classrooms instantaneously came to a halt as prayer was being said over the intercom. The content of the prayer included a call for peace in the world, success and joy at school for teachers and students, unity among students, staff, and parents for a healthy St. Jerome *family*. After the chaplain's prayer, ten students from different language backgrounds, mentioned peace in their language over the intercom. This gesture was to signify the variety of the student and staff population which in no way inhibited the oneness and common objective of all in the school. Angela explained that this was meant to inform students that the job of seeking peace in the world and in the school community was not the responsibility of a selected few, but the call was universal, regardless of language or creed.

In her office, she switched on the computer to check for e-mails, and as the computer was loading, she checked her voicemail messages. There were many that required a reply. She answered the voicemail first, and also incoming telephone calls from parents who needed immediate responses. Angela exhibited great respect towards parents as she replied to the telephone messages. Asked why she showed so much respect in her reply to callers, she said, "You achieve nothing by being harsh and disrespectful"

(p. 22). In between the unpredictable telephone calls, she answered her e-mails. There never seemed to be enough time to answer the e-mails as she was interrupted several times by teachers or secretarial staff with questions on school matters. After listening attentively to staff members, she asked their opinions on issues, and together with them, came up with suggestions. To those who expressed their sense of gratitude, she said, “You know I have always respected your initiatives and opinions, go and do your best, and that should surely be okay” (p. 22). After a teacher had left her office at the end of a discussion, Angela exclaimed, “Oh, they think I have all the answers. I always ask them to take initiatives, failures may come, but that is how they can learn” (p. 22). From my observation, Angela undoubtedly displayed a great sense of persuasion and foresight. She exhibited foresight principally through advice and caution that staff members keep options open for future action. As she always said: “You cannot tell what the future holds, that is why it is always better to keep your options open” (p. 24).

10.20AM

Angela invited a secretary into her office as one of the e-mail required information of staff time and teaching quotas to be sent to the Catholic school board office in Beautiful City. According to Angela, she respected the expertise of that secretary. The secretary and Angela worked together on Angela’s computer, with Angela leaving her office chair for her to get better access to the computer. She herself sat on another chair beside the secretary as they both worked together. Other staff members came in once a while to ask one or the other question to which Angela gave quick answers with her usual smile. In the event of questions that needed longer discussions, Angela booked a formal appointment, noting it in her diary. Some staff and students on

their way to see Angela, and upon seeing her busy retraced their steps, intending to come back when she would be less busy. In her busyness however, Angela always had time for fun which was energizing to both staff and students. While they were working together, the secretary fondly referred to Angela as ‘honey’ reflecting the cordial relationship that existed between the staff and Angela. Angela’s childhood relationships with her siblings could be the reason for the ease with which she related with people. In response to my question as to why the secretary called her ‘honey’, Angela replied, “Relationships make all the difference” (p. 22). And explaining why she allowed the secretary to take her chair, she hesitated, and pensively said:

It does not mean because I am principal I know everything, if she has better knowledge of it than me, then she can sit in that chair and we work together to make this school a place of success. When it comes to help, we can grab her to help. (pp. 20-21)

When the solution to the report was found, and the secretary was on her way out of the office, Angela exclaimed, “We are learning!” (p. 21). Observing Angela dedicatedly working together with the secretary gives the impression that working in collaboration, we can serve the school better. The important thing was the success of the school community and not her position. Additionally, Angela showed that she was ready to learn from other members of the school community.

After completing the work with the secretary, a department head came in to ask a question about allocating teaching subjects to teachers. Since this topic demanded a long discussion, Angela noted it in her diary, and scheduled a formal appointment with the department head. Angela asked the department head to come back at the appointed time and date with suggestions from other staff members. Just as she had done with other staff members who came in to see her, Angela expressed her appreciation for the good work

the department head was doing and added, “I trust you can do it” (p. 21). She looked content and left the office looking very happy. Angela never seemed to lack words of encouragement for one or the other staff member who came to see her.

11.00AM

Just as Angela was preparing to make a second tour of the school, a teacher came into her office. The topic for discussion was about his wife’s health problems, personal family difficulties, and other quandaries he was confronted with at home. Angela’s infectious smile seemed to work the trick when the staff member who looked disturbed in his mood and appearance, replied to Angela’s smile with a dry smile. As usual, Angela showed she was a good and empathetic listener by her occasional comments as the teacher communicated his concerns. The teacher who had come to see Angela ended by saying, “I have not mentioned the problem to anybody other than you” (p. 21). Angela granted him compassion leave of two weeks to enable him take care of himself and his family, but he needed to find a replacement before embarking on leave.

After the teacher’s departure, personnel of the Social Services came to see Angela concerning a St. Jerome student’s attendance rate and general comportment. Angela looked through her computer and indicated that as far as she could see from the records, the student had a 100% attendance rate and nothing adverse had so far been brought to her attention about that student. Angela gave great credit to the St. Jerome Students’ Services for the wonderful work they do for students. The personnel of the social services left content with the impressive attendance rate of the student they had come to enquire about. Immediately the personnel of the social services left, two grade 12 students entered Angela’s office, and before she could say anything, they greeted her first. She

began a conversation with them by asking them what careers they were interested in for the future. There was hardly any response but exchange of jokes transpired between them. Watching and listening to Angela communicating with students suggests a motherly interaction between mother and children, with the fondness of a maternal affection.

Later, a parent and a former staff member of St. Jerome came to see Angela. The parent had come to express gratitude to Angela for the great positive strides in his daughter's general comportment. He gave credit to Angela for the motherly care his daughter reported receiving from her that seemed to have worked the 'magic' in his daughter's life. Unwilling to take all the credit for this positive comment, Angela rather humbly commended all the staff members at St. Jerome for the part they have played in bringing about the positive change in that student. The former staff member at her turn had come to express gratitude to Angela for her support while she was a staff member. As Angela left the office to pick a paper from a printer, I asked the visitors their impressions about Angela. Almost simultaneously, they answered "She is phenomenal" (p. 30).

11.40AM

Angela returned to her computer to reply to messages. Within a few minutes, a former head secretary of the school who had recently retired walked into the office. Angela left her seat, and gave the visitor a hug, and immediately offered her a wrist band with an inscription of the vision of the school for the current academic year. After discussing several matters, the visitor spoke about her newly diagnosed health problem. Angela asked her not to hesitate to call on the St. Jerome school community if there was

anything they could do to help her. She spoke a few words of encouragement to the former secretary who looked visibly touched and expressed her sense of gratitude. After she left, Angela remarked, “I respect her highly, she has contributed immensely to making this school what it is now” (p. 22).

Just before the noon break, a teacher came to see Angela. Before listening to the teacher’s concerns, she excused herself to get a paper from her printer. Asked what she thought of Angela, the teacher replied, “Angela is a grower of leaders” (p. 22). Back in the office, both engaged in conversation for a while, and then left for lunch in the staff room. But on her way there, Angela passed through the gym and the library to see what students were doing.

12.30PM

Back at her desk, a phone call from a parent enquired about the school busing system. Angela began with, “How can I be of service to you?” (p. 22). The parent at the other end of the phone felt entertained and burst out laughing. The conversation revealed that Angela used to drive this parent’s child from her home to school and back. And in the event she was unable to do it, she requested a staff member to do this occasionally. That student’s parents could not afford the bus pass for their child, so Angela helped out.

No sooner had Angela settled down to read her mails than two assistant principals came to discuss the school re-culturation process. This concerned the new strategies and adjustments to deal with the new situation in St. Jerome as a result of a drop in about 35% of the student population during the current school year due to demographic shifts in Dog City. Angela shared ideas with the assistant principals while advising them to listen to the suggestions of staff and students rather than imposing their opinions on them. With

regard to the involvement of the students in the re-culturation process, she suggested; “Let the students feel they are part of the process. . . . Let them do what interests them, as long as it contributes to the general goal of the school” (p. 23). She suggested to the assistant principals to always remember that students’ success was key to the re-culturation process. As the assistant principals left the office, and I patiently waited for Angela’s next encounter, she commented that they would be great principals one day.

2.15PM

A teacher came into Angela’s office, and through their discussions, it became clear that Angela was not only interested in the work output of the teachers in the school, but also respected their opinions. She was equally interested in their persons and what would become of them in the future. Consequently, at the end of each academic year, she asked each teacher to reply in writing to the following questions, among many others:

1. Where do you want to be next year?
2. What area or subject would you like to teach or work in next year?
3. What would you like to do for extra-curricular activities next year?
4. What would you change if you could?

Angela would proceed to read each staff member’s answers to the questions. She would then make time to meet them one-on-one, to discuss how best each could be helped to achieve their goals.

2. 35PM

Angela gave a tour of the school to a visitor who had requested it. Through her explanations of the various programs and events of the school, she exhibited a great awareness of all the happenings in and around the school. She expressed her pride and

admiration at the great initiatives of some of the teachers in making their classes interesting for the students. She commented, “In the school, to succeed, we need to get creatively innovative” (p. 23). In course of the tour, she passed through the classroom of the special needs students and explained to the visitor that special needs students form an integral part of the St. Jerome school community. She came back to the office as school was closing at 3.05pm. On her way to her office, she met two of the school janitors and in her usual manner, she jovially greeted them and continued to her office. Observing Angela’s day as a leader, my impression was that she was gifted with dexterity at effectively dealing with scheduled and unscheduled appointments. Many of the students on their way to the school bus bade her good bye before leaving. As students and some of the teachers made their way out of the school for the day, Angela settled down to work at her computer. I left St Jerome at 3.15pm, but before leaving I asked her when she normally left the school. She said, “It depends on what has been happening in the school on any given day” (p. 24). And that she sometimes worked in her office until 5.00 pm or even beyond. Observing Angela this day in school, I was profoundly touched by her inexhaustible energy, and her ability to encourage staff, students, and parents. Needless to say, Angela has a remarkable and formidable disposition combined with humility, service, transparency, and flexibility that enables her to be an able, attractive and popular leader.

St. Mark High School (Principal Denis)

St. Mark is a two storey building with five staircases and one elevator linking the main floor to the second floor. Founded in the early 1980s, it serves grade nine to twelve students. It is located in the North end of Dog City, and it serves five relatively wealthy

neighborhoods. The school has continued to contend with decreasing enrolment over the previous years, because of the gradual ageing of the region, and a lack of development space for expansion of this part of Dog City. Most students come from middle class to relatively wealthy families. St. Mark was established to assist parents in the development of their children in spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social growth, and to create and sustain a school community inspired by the Gospel. As well, St Mark aims at relating all of creation to the Good News of salvation in order that the knowledge students acquire of the world around them, and about life and people is enlightened by their Catholic Faith. As a Catholic school, St. Mark seeks to inculcate students with Gospel values of justice, freedom, and charity. To emphasize the Christian character and community spirit of the school, there is a school prayer that reminds students and staff that the school exists to promote love, and by so doing, establish a bond with home, school, and church.

St Mark is a designated French bilingual high school committed to assist students become fluent in both official languages of Canada. The school has 47 teachers, 14 teaching assistants, 18 support staff, and close to 700 students. Academic programs designed to meet the needs of all students, regardless of ability, are offered. All students study Christian ethics, which is compulsory.

The main entrance to the school is designed to represent open arms welcoming each and every one to St. Mark. On entering the school through the main doorway, one notices showcases that display major events or happenings in the school or around the world. For example, the showcases would display things about Advent and Christmas during the advent season, or exhibit successes chalked by the school in various activities including sports. Past the showcases is a large fountain area. Above the fountain area is a

meeting space with tables and chairs, and directly behind the meeting area is the large commons area, the most favorite gathering place for students. The commons area is a wide open space in the building, serving as a multipurpose area. Two lecture theaters and a drama room with their collapsible walls that fold to the side open to the students' commons area. The roof of the commons has 16 skylights bathing the school in natural light. The commons is also used as a cafeteria for students and a place for socialization.

The administrative offices are to the right, as one enters through the main entrance of the school. The principal's office, which is always open to everyone, has large windows facing both the outside of the building and the hallway. Along the western wall, and on the floor of the principal's office are a rock, a pot of gold, a towel, and a servant-leadership bowl, which explained, represent the concept of viewing leadership in St. Mark as being based on the leadership style of Jesus. The rock represents Peter the rock foundation of leadership in the Bible, the servant-leadership bowl and towel signifying the washing of the feet of followers, and the pot of gold symbolizing the treasure in St. Mark hidden in the students and staff that needs nurturing for full growth. These symbols signify the objective of the person occupying the principal's office: service in light of the Gospel.

The assistant principals' offices are further inside the main office which has four desk areas for four administrative assistants. On the wall adjacent to the main office is a portrait of the clergyman in whose honor the school was built. Other portraits include past prime ministers of Canada and the Queen, showing the importance of the past and its relevance for the present. There is also a peace pole with peace translated into ten different languages from around the world, depicting the tolerance for diversity at St.

Mark represented by the 30% of the student population coming from non-Caucasian backgrounds. Included in this figure are 10% each of aboriginal and students that take English as an additional language. Near the peace pole is the school emblem with a picture of the Cross signifying that St. Mark is a school community founded on Gospel values.

Classrooms are located on both levels of the school. The classrooms and the library (with over 20 computers) on the second floor have large windows allowing people to look down into the commons area situated in the middle of the horse-shoe shaped school building. The school has one gymnasium that houses, in addition to the main gymnasium both a multipurpose room (for classes and for wrestling practice) and a workout room equipped with treadmills, weight benches, and other workout equipment. The staff room which is located on the first floor, is unable to seat the entire staff at a time, but staff gathers there at various times either to eat, chat, and socialize. The school was designed without a chapel, as students are encouraged to make use of a nearby parish church for prayer in the event they feel the need to pray, and provided the parish church is not in use for other purposes by the parish.

Community building activities include athletics, social and recreational, which are designed to encourage participation and to give everyone a chance to belong, in order to build a strong school spirit. Some of the social activities students may participate in include the school choir, coffee house, dance, debating club, drama productions, costume and makeup, social justice, video club, and year book club.

Freed from the safety concerns of St. Jerome, St Mark's community prides itself in its increasing students' academic achievement attributable to improved students'

attendance rates. In addition to its relatively safe location, St. Mark benefits from a cooperation program with Dog City Police Service which provides community policing and serves as a resource to the whole school community. Inter alia, the goals of this cooperation program include developing positive attitudes and relationships between students, youth, and police, helping create a safe environment, and the police serving as positive role models to students, and to help students integrate school life with public services.

A School Day in the Life of Denis (October 2nd, 2008)

9.15AM

Denis was at a staff meeting when I arrived at St. Mark at 9.15am. Students were talking gleefully in the corridors on the way to the classrooms. Two students walked towards Denis' office and were disappointed he was not there. They told me they had come to say hello to him before going to their classrooms. As they walked towards the students' common area, they saw another student whose facial expression reflected sadness. They engaged him in a conversation in an attempt to cheer him up, but failing, changed their direction towards the students' common area, went up the northwest staircase, making their way to their classrooms.

9.30 AM

There was prayer over the intercom at 9.30 am, led by the school chaplain. Students and staff stood still during the prayer which called for world peace. The prayer exhorted all students to be kind to one another, and eschew bullying each other, especially the weak among them, so as to make the school a safe and happy place for all. When I finally had the chance to meet Denis, he explained to me that he sometimes took

turns in leading prayers over the intercom. According to Denis, he led prayers in order to teach students the importance of prayer. As teachers made their way to the classrooms, one of them remarked, “The meeting was exciting, we are being challenged to think a lot about the good of our students as well as the continual development of our school community” (p. 21).

Denis entered his office and prepared himself for a meeting downtown organized by a charitable non-profit organization of which he was a member. This organization concerned itself with youth at risk, mostly Aboriginal children who, according to Denis, were quite often left to flounder. Denis explained that the organization serves as a voice for disadvantaged children. Before leaving, Denis informed the two assistant principals of his temporary absence from the school.

10.45AM

Denis returned from the meeting, entered his office, and before sitting in his chair, accessed messages left on his voicemail, and immediately started answering the messages that needed a reply. After replying to the voicemail messages, he settled at his computer to reply to the e-mails. In between replying his e-mails, Denis explained to me what the staff meeting held before 9.30 that morning was about. Discussions that took place at the meeting were a part of the school system’s continuous improvement framework and focused on the development of long term students’ and staff faith formation, improved social and personal values and skills for well being and citizenship for students, improved participation and outcomes for First Nations and Métis students in school programs, improved student learning outcomes in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Questions the meeting sought to answer were:

1. Are teachers sorting students or helping all students to succeed?
2. Do students reach their potential?
3. Do teachers keep data in order to better help students?
4. Do teachers agree they should make students want to be in school?
5. Do teachers and students participate in various school activities, and have a sense of community and belonging?
6. Do students have improved social skills? Are they helped to develop positive relationships with each other and with the larger school community?
7. Do teachers know what can be done differently for the success of students?
8. Do teachers know that “learning for all means success for all?”

In answer to the reason for all the above objectives and questions, Denis argued that, these questions serve to define what stewardship is all about. Stewardship implies having concern for students’ success, while at the same time ensuring that teachers give the right inputs to make students’ success possible. Students, according to Denis, are encouraged to be in school if teachers create the necessary environment for them in their classrooms. Denis further explained that leadership is not just about taking care of the strong, but the weak as well, because that is what community is about. School communities can become stronger if students are helped to develop social skills in healthy relationships. A strong school community is one that knows how to care for its weak members to make them feel they belong. Leadership involves serving the needs of followers, and that is the reason students must be helped to reach their potential. According to Denis, to help students succeed involves catering to their different needs because each student is unique and therefore we cannot have one- size-fit-all as a means of solving their problems. Denis

also believes that leadership is about being fair. That is the reason he takes special interest in seeing to it that teachers keep helpful data about students. Denis firmly believes that as a school leader, community building is important, and, that is possible if teachers and students are encouraged to get involved in the community building activities of the school.

In course of observing Denis and listening to his discussions with teachers, it was clear that he had a great passion for protecting and doing his best to see to it that students succeed. Asked whether my observation about him was true, Denis agreed, and said that he has been accused of overprotecting students, but that is an accusation he takes proudly, because students need that special care in order to mature into responsible citizens. In his view, what students truly are is not what they are today, but what they become four or ten years down the road after they have graduated from school.

11.00AM

Denis left his office for a department heads' meeting in one of the meeting rooms on the second floor. The meeting, chaired by Denis, started with a prayer led by one of the department heads. The department heads of St. Mark whose opinions Denis highly respected, served as an advisory council to him. One of the department heads volunteered to be the secretary for the day because the secretary ship of this committee was rotated to give a chance to everybody on the council to be very involved in the affairs of the committee, both during and after meetings. The meeting went on in an open and friendly atmosphere. Department heads shared ideas, and clearly demonstrated respect for the opinions of each other by giving everybody the chance to talk and express ideas exhaustively. Denis mostly listened and gave inputs where necessary. He showed himself

as an excellent collaborator as he accepted suggestions while presenting proposals other staff members had expressed to him prior to the meeting. As the discussions went on, Denis kept stressing the importance of innovativeness and creativeness in the various subject areas to make learning interesting for the students. The meeting with the dual theme of instructional leadership, and students' success at all levels, lasted 35 minutes. At the end of the meeting, Denis expressed his confidence in the wonderful work the department heads were doing for the academic development and success of students. The department heads responded with gratitude for the support he has continued to give them in their effort, not only to making the school a great place of learning, but also an environment of good relationships among staff, students, and parents.

11. 40AM

Before returning to his office from the meeting, Denis made a quick tour on the second floor, and freely greeted the teachers and students as he passed by. Back in his office, he answered a voicemail message left by a superintendent to whom some parents had made a complaint that they were not getting their phone calls through to the school. Denis immediately called on the administrative secretaries to discuss the problem. During the discussion, it became clear that the fault was from the cyber system, and not from the school. According to Denis, sometimes there are accusations similar to the present one which from all indications, seem credible. Those are the accusations for which a lot of patience is needed in order to build trust, because some parents impatiently verbally attack whoever is receiving their call, and normally it is the principal. Denis indicated that in such instances absolute patience is needed in order to satisfy angry parents with explanations. As Denis was busy talking with the secretaries, a student entered his office

to pick a paper clip. I spontaneously reacted by questioning the student “Why do you come to the principal’s office rather than getting the paper clip elsewhere?” she sharply replied, “Denis is always glad to help us, that is why I came to his office” (p. 23).

12.00 NOON

At lunch hour, Denis went to the staff room for lunch with the staff members present in the room. During lunch, discussions between Denis and teachers were cordial and touched on students’ welfare, football, and sporting activities. Most of the students who stayed in the school to eat their packed lunch gathered in the students’ commons where they talked and shared jokes. Other students seemed to be busy getting ready for the next class after a quick lunch.

12.30PM

Denis got back to his office and sat down to answer e-mails and to do some paper work. As Denis worked, a staff member or student periodically interrupted for a casual visit or serious discussion. Denis was never too busy to answer questions from students or staff members. The afternoon was generally quiet as Denis got a lot of his paper work done and replied to his e-mails.

1. 30PM.

Denis made a tour of the school, starting from the second floor and working downwards during which he greeted teachers and students in the classrooms. As he entered the industrial arts room, students worked indefatigably with their tools as if to show their principal how hard they were working. Amidst the noise of their machinery, they waved at Denis, as if to say, “We are enjoying ourselves here”. The response from the teachers and students, as Denis went from classroom to classroom was an impressive

cordiality between the students, teachers, and their principal. It was evident that they were pleased with the visit of their servant-leader principal. As Denis walked towards the classroom of the special needs students, he picked up garbage in the corridors and threw it in the garbage container, before entering their classroom. They exhibited a fondness for him as most of them wanted to speak to him all at once. Denis approached two of the special needs students who were rather reserved and asked how they were doing. They replied with a broad smile. Denis later on explained that as much as he was able, he made frequent visits to the special needs students to assure them of his support and care.

From the special needs students, he entered the classroom of the students of English as a Second Language (ESL). In the presence of both myself and the teacher of the ESL students, Denis showered praises on her as very hard working and innovative. This was as a result of the quick level of progress of the ESL students. The students were happy to see Denis, and proud to demonstrate their progress at learning English. Denis congratulated them, and they responded joyfully, evidently showing that they were happy and grateful for his visit.

1. 50PM

Denis was back in his office, and, a teacher came in to offer suggestions about the staff meeting that took place in the morning of that day. Apparently, Denis had told them at the staff meeting to keep pondering over the morning's discussions to enable them to come up with suggestions that would be collated and later on discussed at a future meeting. Denis listened carefully, and noted the suggestions in his diary. Soon after that discussion, another teacher came in to talk about some of the school programs regarding the success of students. In the course of their discussions, Denis mentioned that in his

mind, students' success was very broad. He indicated that as one of his examples, he believed that getting students to be in school was part of success. Achieving 95% attendance average as their current school average was, was an indication of success. But the crucial question, according to Denis was where do students go after they finish school? Are students helped enough to face the challenges of the future? He continued, "The impact of Catholic school education does not fully happen until kids begin having their own kids. To talk about hope for kids is to talk about hope and resurrection" (p. 22).

This discussion revealed that Denis was very interested in pastoral care for students. Pastoral care is a teacher mentorship program that aims at helping students in their day to day school life. Additionally, in events such as death in a family, students could receive the care and support they needed from the teacher who was their mentor. According to Denis, the pastoral care of students implies two basic questions: First, in the event students encounter problems of any kind, is there an adult in the school community to help them through those problems? Second, how are students helped to live positively in the school and in the future?

As Denis settled to work at his computer and send out replies to e-mails, he noticed a retired staff member approaching the school's main entrance. The lady had served the school for many years. Denis promptly left the office, and enthusiastically hugged her while congratulating her and thanking her for the successful retirement and valuable service to the St. Mark school community. The former staff member expressed gratitude to Denis for the wonderful working relationships she had working with him. Back in his office, Denis was engaged in signing bills and doing some more paper work. Phone calls interrupted the paper work from time to time, but he responded respectfully

and patiently. When asked why he took his time to patiently talk on the phone, he commented to me, “The way you talk to a parent or anybody from outside the school, either presents a good or bad image of the school to that person, and that is why it is important to communicate well, and patiently” (p. 24).

The paper work done, he went to the chaplain’s office to discuss a suggestion made by a staff member that students be encouraged to hold hands during a once-a-month prayer with students lining the hallways in a symbolic community circle. Denis listened attentively to the chaplain’s concerns, discomfort, and disapproval of the suggestion, and requested the chaplain to try out the suggestion.

At this time, the husband of one of the teachers entered the chaplain’s office, and after some teasing and sharing of jokes, Denis made positive comments about how hard working his wife was as a teacher on staff. The man obviously looked pleased about the praises showered on his wife. On his way back to the office, Denis chatted briefly with a teacher about some geese that had been sighted in great numbers in some farmlands known to both of them. Continuing towards his office, he greeted students who graciously replied to the greeting. One of the students later on remarked, “Denis is gentle and kind, we feel comfortable in his presence” (p. 24).

2.35PM

I questioned Denis about why he left his door open when he was busy working. Denis replied, “I leave my door open so that people can see I am open to receive them” (p. 24). After working for a while, Denis made another tour of the school. In course of the tour, he saw a student seated on a corridor seat near his office. He approached her, and asked whether she needed help. But the student brightened up, and indicated that she did

not need anything in particular at that time, she was just fine sitting down quietly. Denis asked her not to hesitate to call him if she needed help. During the tour, Denis again called at the classroom of the special needs students. Explaining his special care and concern for the special needs students, Denis said, “They have to be given the assurance that somebody is always looking out for them, and available to them” (p. 22).

Back in his office, a parent phoned, and in an aggressive tone complained about his inability to get his calls through to the school. Denis patiently explained the problem to the satisfaction of the parent, and assured him that all was being done to rectify the situation. School ended at 3.05 pm, and as students left the building some were heard wishing Denis good bye as he waved back.

My impression of Denis after the day’s observation is that, appearances are deceptive. Because, in his imposing giant physical build is a gentle, kind hearted, considerate father of children and staff. One would think an angry word would never pass Denis’ lips. Upon making him aware of this impression, he replied, “I can be pretty straightforward when it becomes necessary, otherwise, I would not be doing this school community any good” (p. 24). On the whole, Denis is a man of integrity whose, amiable character and loving kindness to students and staff distinguishes him as a serviceable personality to his school community.

Summary of the Context of the Two Schools and the Major Servant-Leadership

Characteristics Exhibited by their Principals

In sum, the two schools are large urban school communities whose students’ population reflected that of the local area in which they were situated. Poverty issues were of a greater concern to the St. Jerome school than the St. Mark school which was

based in a more stable and affluent community but had its share of the problems of the formative years of teenage students. Both school communities had similar goals and objectives based on the Gospel. To achieve these, servant-leadership style that placed a premium on community building according to the leadership style of Jesus Christ was paramount.

My observation of both participants revealed that even though they were different personalities, they both exhibited servant-leadership characteristics that indicated they cared for members of their school communities, and were interested in community building. Both participants manifested a strong sense of collaboration, and respect for members of their school communities, which probably explained the reason for the trust they seemed to enjoy from their followers. In addition, it was clear from activities such as formal and informal meetings, and their interactions with members of their school communities that both were committed to helping their constituents grow. Furthermore, in their exercise of leadership, both participants seemed to suggest that leadership is not about power and position, but rather about service to the community for which one was leader. Observing both participants, they seemed to be silently, yet resoundingly sending out one clear message: leadership is about relationships and being a source of hope to followers.

In the following sections, I provide a synopsis of the themes identified during the entire observation period (including the two days chosen in the life of the observation participants) that complement and support the interview data.

Synopsis of Themes from the Observation Data

In light of the activities of the days selected in the life of each of the two observation participants and the observation data in general, the major themes identified as supporting and complementing data of the interviews are: (a) service to the school community, (b) relationships, (c) care for students, staff, and parents, (d) prayer life, (e) collaboration and empowerment of students and staff, (f) growth of people, and (g) community building.

Service to the School Community

According to Greenleaf (1977), the deliberate choice of the servant-leader is to serve others. My observation of Angela and Denis for two weeks each revealed a commitment to serving their school communities. In their offices, evidence that Angela and Denis worked hard to keep their school communities abreast with fulfilling their schools' objectives were manifest through their answers to the numerous phone calls and e-mails. Observing Angela and Denis, they seemed to reflect the spirit of hard work and sacrifice of their mothers that had made them what they were. Both principals worked diligently at their computers, replying to their mail, sending out replies and information by e-mail. According to Angela, she received an average of 50 e-mails per day, more than two thirds of which were school related; a situation which was not different from Denis'. Denis received between 50 to 70 e-mails daily with a little more than half related to his community involvement activities and administrative duties. In response to the reason she was religiously committed to her work, Angela said, "It is not about me, it is about the students, somebody had to work hard to make me what I am, I need to give that back in service to this school community" (p. 30).

Observing Angela working in collaboration with one of the school secretaries at her computer, while leaving her chair for the secretary to get better access to the computer was a pointer to the fact that Angela's interest was in rendering service to the school community, and not in her position as a principal. Denis exhibited service to his school community by the two way interaction that existed between him and his staff members. He either invited a staff member to his office for discussions or went to the staff member's classroom, rather than always inviting them to his office. He explained that serving the school community is more important than the location of the discussion.

On three different days, Denis' desire to serve was evident when I observed him picking up garbage in the impeccably clean corridors as he made a tour of the school. Denis viewed his action of picking up garbage in the corridors as a way of setting an example for students that no job was unimportant to engage his attention. By so doing, Denis was probably thinking of the power of good examples and role modeling. A further interpretation of Denis' example of rubbish picking is that if he was willing to exhibit service in little things, he was equally capable of showing the same in bigger things. In Denis' understanding, the act of picking up garbage was a means of teaching students to look beyond themselves and learn to show concern for the whole school community. Additionally, the act of service demonstrated through picking up garbage in the corridors was a sign to students that the caretaker's job, like any other jobs in the school, benefitted everybody, and as a community, everybody should show concern, because it was each individual's responsibility to help keep the school clean.

On different occasions, I observed Denis and Angela helping with decorations of their schools in readiness for visitors and parents. For Denis, the decorations were meant

to welcome parents to the school for the ceremony of the principal's honor roll. Angela was preparing to welcome students from neighboring schools for a talk on biotechnology and environmental protection by the first female Canadian astronaut. By their act of service through helping with the decorations, both participants demonstrated that cooperation with each other made service easier.

Prior to staff and committee meetings, Denis and Angela helped in the arrangement of chairs and tables. Observing them at meetings, and their openness to suggestions and discussions, both Angela and Denis' were concerned about the success of their school communities, as long as opinions expressed helped the general purpose. In a single day, both made several tours, keeping themselves aware of what was happening in the school at different times. During their informal tours, they spontaneously engaged both students and teachers in conversations as if to say, "I am always prepared to listen to you." The spontaneity with which they related with staff and students seemed to indicate that, for them, servant-leadership was not an attitude you put on when convenient and rejected when not convenient.

At a professional development seminar involving all Catholic school teachers of the Ronald School Division, during coffee break, Angela served muffins and goodies to teachers. When asked why she did not request one of her teachers to do this, she replied, "That is the reason for leadership; *service*" (p. 30). Both Angela and Denis seemed to understand Autry's (2001) statement on the reason for service, reminiscent of Denis's observation that the more one served, the better one became at service.

The 'open door policy' which both participants had, implied that people were always welcome into their offices for formal and informal meetings, and that a listening

ear always awaited them. They explained that the reason for the ‘open door policy’ was to encourage students, staff, and parents to make their problems known before they got worse. Both participants indicated that their priority was not about their position, person, or the control of people, but about facilitation and service to their school communities. Angela and Denis, however, stressed that even though service was the reason for their leadership, it would not have been possible without establishing healthy relationships with people.

Relationships as Foundation for Happier Community

Three quotations from Denis set the tone for the reason both participants viewed relationships as very important. On two different occasions, Denis observed, a) “Relationships are very important, contacting people makes a lot of difference” (p. 26), b) “It is important that we teach kids how to build strong relationships and ethics of living” (p. 28), and, c) “I do not care what you do in your class, what is your relationship with my daughter in your school or class?” (p. 28). He and Angela agreed that without relationships, the world would be a lonely place and meaningless. Consequently, both of them exhibited good relationships with their students, and staff. It is remarkable to hear both respondents greeting students and staff as they walked in the corridors of their schools. Angela was always the first to greet a teacher or student before being greeted. Providing an explanation for being the first to greet, Angela said, it is because for some students, “just a simple good morning could be healing for them for the day if they have had a bad beginning of day” (p. 26). To both Angela and Denis, relationships serve as a reminder that one is not alone, there are others around who need to be acknowledged and cared for.

Students were happy to say 'hi' to either principal as they passed by their offices. A student who came to Denis' office to ask for a paper clip was asked why she came to his office rather than elsewhere. She replied, "Denis is always glad to help us" (p. 24). The ease with which students approached Denis to say hello or ask questions suggested that his big and robust looking stature was not intimidating or a hindrance to them. Additionally, the good relationship that existed between Denis and his students was revealed when on one of his tours of the school, a student asked him at lunch hour, "Denis, what are you doing for lunch?" (p. 26). He replied with an entertaining joke that caused the student to burst out laughing. Also, a student commented when asked about what she thought of Denis. She unhesitatingly said, "Denis is approachable. He is a father to us here in this school" (p. 29). Evidently, Angela and Denis combined formal and informal interactions conveniently well. They contended that a leader's task is not only related to formal relationships, but also informal relationships. Both relationships are equally important because quite often, formal relationships are only skin-deep. Their relationships with students and staff were characterized by humility in their ways of communication and acceptance of both staff and students.

Staff also responded well to Angela and Denis during and outside staff meetings. Expatiating on the reason for such relationships, Angela observed, "Leadership is no more the boss telling everybody what they should do, it is about relationships" (p. 26). On one occasion, as Angela entered the staff room for morning prayer, a staff member, after exchanging greetings with her, directly said to her, "My favorite principal" (p. 24), which brought a pleasant bright smile to Angela's face. The existence of a healthy relationship between both participants and their staff was evidenced by the trust some

staff members had in them to the extent of discussing their personal and private matters. An example of this good relationship was exhibited by a teacher in St. Jerome, who after a discussion said to Angela, “I have not mentioned this problem to anybody other than you” (p. 21).

As both participants walked the corridors of their schools, and went from classroom to classroom, there was an aura of good feeling and cordial relationship with the students and staff. They always seemed to have either a joke or a kind word for one or the other student, or staff member. Although unspoken, both participants seemed to say that *someone watched over me and cared for me when I was growing up, I in turn will watch over and care for you*. The good relationships extended to the secretarial staff, and reflected through the affectionate reference to Angela by one of them as ‘honey’. Angela and Denis manifested inspiring relationships with their assistant principals by the respect they accorded them during their various interactions. Both participants expressed confidence in the leadership qualities of their assistant principals. An assistant principal who expressed great satisfaction working with Angela, even though he did not always agree with Angela on everything teased; “Angela has got her own alphabet, for example ADZFTG” (p. 25). By mixing up the proper order of the alphabet in his reference to Angela’s style of doing things, he was implying that, Angela gets things done not necessarily by following conventions, but through both formal and informal means. They both burst out laughing at that comment.

Denis and Angela on occasions demonstrated that servant-leadership did not imply absence of problems. Asked about difficulties, Denis said, “I have had to ask one or two teachers to leave this school in the last academic year or so, because they were not

beneficial to this place, but I had to help them find new places where they could better fit in” (p. 28). In a similar vein, Angela said, “You probably are lucky to be here at a time when I do not need to tell anybody to smarten up, but as I told you, I always do it respectfully” (p. 29). Both agreed that people cannot be coerced into relationships, thus, they do the best they can at relationships, leaving constituents either to respond or not. Gleaned from my observation of the two participants is the conclusion that servant-leadership is about being of service to constituents, providing them with hope, and helping them to grow, however, it would be wrong to think that it is all about being soft or being eternally nice to people. Situations may require the application of tough love. However, the remarkable element of servant-leadership is respect for the individual in order to look positively on him/her in the event of a necessary disciplinary action.

Care and Support for Students, Staff and Parents

Both participants manifested admirable ways of supporting and caring for students, staff, and parents in ways that corroborate the interview data. Via their work and commitment, participants seemed to say that, *I am a principal today because of the care and support of my former principals; therefore, I give it back to this school community*. Through a telephone conversation between Angela and a parent, it was revealed that she used to drive a student to and from school, because the parents of that student were unable to afford the bus pass for their child. On days when Angela was unable to make it for one or the other reason, she requested a teacher on staff to drive the student to and from school on her behalf. Angela explained the reason she had to drive the student to and from school herself. She said, “I needed to do that so that she could have education, we need to look out for everybody” (p. 23). By driving the student to and

from school, Angela demonstrated that servant-leadership, though geared towards achieving success, involved looking after the needs of the needy in the school community as well. Angela further demonstrated her care for students when she received a report that a fifteen year old student had become pregnant. She was personally concerned and asked the school counselors to do all they could to help the girl through her period of pregnancy. The first step, before everything else, was to re-assure the girl of the support of the St. Jerome school community so as to help her cope with the situation she might consider embarrassing. The girl, being a recent immigrant to Canada, had little command of the English language, and was from a low income home, which most likely explained the predicament she was in. Angela's care and support for students was further demonstrated when a 19 year old pregnant mother of two children who had been out of school for four years came seeking admission at St. Jerome. The reason for her choice of St. Jerome was because she wanted to complete her education in a caring supportive environment. Also, she was happy about the proximity of St. Jerome to the pre-school her two children attended. Angela patiently listened to her story with great interest, agreed to admit her, then directed her to the administrative secretary in charge of students' enrolment. After her departure, Angela thoughtfully commented, "We need to be sensitive enough to be able to help seemingly hopeless cases like this one" (p. 24). Angela further observed that it takes vigilance and empathy to care for cases such as this 19 year old mother of two.

In a slightly different school environment, Denis similarly demonstrated his care for his students via the devoted concern he showed toward a student walking alone through the corridors during break time. According to Denis, he took extra time and care

to look out for that student because “he is a loner, and just needed that extra care” (p. 25). As well, Denis manifested his concern for students when, upon seeing a student who looked sick sitting in the corridor adjacent to his office, asked what he could do to help her. The student immediately brightened up and her somber mood faded away. She thanked Denis, and indicated that she was fine. Denis explained that as a leader, he took the extra step to reach out to individual students on most days, because without doing that some students will be missed and remain uncared for. The care Denis received as a child from his single mother and older brother seemed to play out by the concern he showed for students individually.

A question directed to a student in order to ascertain what impressions students had about Denis yielded the following response: “Denis is a father to us, and we know that” (p. 26). The student pointed out that Denis always encouraged them to be the best they could be. As well, he did not allow bullying or disrespect among students. Other indications of Denis’ care and support for students were demonstrated through his visit to the Farm school located on the northeastern side of Dog City, about 45 minutes away from St. Mark. The Farm school was a self-directed place of schooling for students who have been relocated as a result of their inability to fit in the normal school system.

Another place Denis mentioned was a Catholic alternate high school where an assistant principal from St. Mark took a student for admission. Accordingly, the Farm school and Alternate school were places equipped with facilities for catering to the needs of students having problems adapting to the normal school system. Denis explained that those two alternate schools were the route to success for some students. Later enquiries from the

director of the Farm school indicated that there has been 75% success rate among their graduates.

With regard to staff, both participants were equally caring and supportive. “I just want you to know how much I appreciate that” (p. 30). These were words of appreciation expressed to Denis by one of the secretarial staff for granting her compassion leave to visit and care for a sick family member. According to Denis, “Little acts of kindness and understanding of staff members’ difficulties and problems help increase their output” (p. 30). One of the assistant principals who discussed his mother’s health problems with Denis received words of sympathy. Denis promised to be a support as much as he was able, and encouraged the assistant principal not to hesitate to ask for some days off in order to see his mother if that became necessary.

Angela, like Denis, manifested her care and support for staff through her willingness to grant some days off to staff members who needed it if that would help them solve family problems. Angela readily granted a few days’ compassionate leave to a teacher whose mother was getting ready to undergo surgery. As she said, if they dedicate their time and energies serving the school community so well, they must be helped in ways that would enable them to better serve the community. But before staff members left on compassion leave, Angela always made sure they found someone to stand in for them while they are away.

Denis and Angela pointed out that in addition to encouraging teachers to taking initiatives, they were open to welcoming innovative ideas regarding teaching in new and interesting ways that would make school attractive for students. According to Angela, she would always remain grateful to her former principals who did not frown upon her good

initiatives and innovative ways of teaching. Inspired by her former principals, she had been led to keep encouraging teachers on her staff to be ready to share novel ways of teaching with their colleagues. Both participants agreed that new ways of teaching had a two way benefit; they benefited teachers as well as students. First, teachers improved their teaching skills through sharing their teaching talents, and second, it opened the minds of students who were the main objects of the learning process.

Prayer Life in the School Community

The African saying that *the crab does not beget a bird* comes in handy at this point. Angela's and Denis' background as fervent Catholic families may have been influential in the way the two participants showed concern for prayer in their schools. The concern for prayer in both school communities however raises a key question: Is prayer is a *sine qua non* for servant-leadership? While the importance of prayer in the life of a servant-leader may be a debatable topic, in the Catholic school community, it is a non question, because prayer is an integral part of the life of a Catholic school community (*Lumen gentium*, 1964) as participants expressed during the interviews and clearly demonstrated by the two observation participants. Daily prayer over the intercom, before the beginning of classes, and at the beginning of staff meetings formed part of the school life. On occasions, prayer and reflections over the internet served as a means of instruction and community building, as the carefully chosen words of prayer could inspire both students and staff to action. According to Denis, on a few occasions, staff members had expressed appreciation to him regarding the words of meditation which he had sometimes articulated over the intercom.

Both Angela and Denis often promised to pray for staff members who were undergoing various problems and difficulties, thus indicating their care and support for them and the spirit of community building. On more than two occasions, I heard both Angela and Denis telling staff members; “I will pray for you.” “Let us pray over it.” In the Catholic school context, resorting to prayer or promising one’s prayerful support implies, *I empathize, I understand, I care, I am with you not only now, but until a solution is found*. In St. Jerome, the staff gathered for voluntary prayer on Monday mornings at the beginning of the week. Attendance at such prayers was not obligatory. During staff prayer time, all present were offered the opportunity to mention names or intentions they wished to be prayed for. Staff members took turns mentioning prayer intentions, and these were prayed for as a community. Angela led one of the two prayer sessions during the two weeks observation period.

Responsibilities at staff prayer sessions were rotated with no single person dominating the sessions. Even though, unspoken, prayer life seemed to help build community in both schools. Communal prayer brought them together, and provided them with ways of sharing their concerns. The importance attached to prayer, and the conscious effort made to promote a life of prayer as I observed in both Sts. Jerome and Mark, support the view of participants in the interview data that faith in Jesus Christ is the basis of their servant-leadership.

Other instances of prayer life appeared in the form of retreats organized for the grade nine students at the start of their school year in their new school environments. At St. Jerome, the grade nine students were bused to a nearby parish for their full-day retreat which ended with a prayer session directed by one of the priest chaplains of the school.

At St. Mark, a half-day retreat was organized in a nearby elementary school. At both retreats, the major emphasis was in the importance of each student helping to build a healthy school community, and of supporting and respecting one another. Closing the retreat of St. Mark grade nine students, Denis reminded them to view their new school as a Christian environment where, as a school community, support for one another was paramount.

Collaboration and Empowerment of Followers

The credibility both participants enjoyed in their school communities seemed to have partly stemmed from their promotion of collaboration as an essential ingredient in servant-leadership. Servant-leadership without collaboration is comparable to benevolence without a consideration of the interest of the constituent. In course of observing Angela, I asked her: What indicates that you are a collaborator? Angela explained, “The vision of St. Jerome for the 2008/2009 academic year was not my unilateral decision. It was arrived at through the input of all the staff, secretaries, caretakers, teachers, teacher assistants, and the suggestions of students” (p. 22). This is how Angela demonstrated her ability to collaborate. Invited by the Ronald school division office to share ideas at a professional development day on the re-culturation of St. Jerome, she worked through the talk with her two assistant principals and other staff members. The re-culturation process was embarked upon as a result of the loss of a little bit over 35% of the St. Jerome students’ population to a new school in Dog City. There was therefore the need to develop new ways of adjusting to the new reality. The processes of adjusting to the new reality were termed re-culturation by the St. Jerome staff. Angela and her teachers were called upon to share their thoughts with other

teachers regarding their success in dealing and living through the new changes. Together with the staff, they agreed to divide the talk into five parts. Angela and one of the assistant principals delivered their share of the talk, with three other staff members playing their part. The talk was successfully delivered as a group effort, and was greatly appreciated by the teachers from other schools. During the talk, Angela clearly stated that it was a group endeavor. She admitted that the success of the talk would not have been possible without the wonderful ideas and collaboration of her staff. Angela further explained that getting everybody on board as demonstrated during the preparation for the talk was one of the ways to building a stronger school community where everybody shared ownership of events and happenings in the school. Again, the healthy collaboration between Angela and her staff brings to mind the saying: *divided we fall, united we stand*. Interpreted in leadership terms, one of the servant-leader's greatest tasks is the respect for the contributions of others in community building.

In respect of one of the secretarial staff whose expertise Angela highly respected, she said more than once, "When it comes to help, we grab her to help" (p. 21). Perhaps re-enacting the influence of her siblings on her, by being helped to look beyond herself, Angela firmly believed that success in leadership involved the acknowledgement and the ability to tap the gifts of constituents for the good of the school community.

Denis similarly demonstrated his love for collaboration during discussions with staff members. His gift at the art of listening and sharing his suggestions while asking for the opinions of staff members at staff meetings showed him to be a passionate collaborator. Furthermore, his willingness to ask for evaluation from staff members either in writing or in face-to-face discussions was additional supportive evidence of his love

for collaboration. As well, Denis manifested his preference for collaboration when he engaged the school chaplain in a discussion of the suggestions some teachers had put forward with regard to the once-a-month community prayer where students held hands. Denis listened carefully to the concerns of the chaplain and suggested that they give the proposal a try. Denis was elated when the trial was a resounding success on the very first day of its implementation. Commenting on that success on another day, Denis said, “We should not always be afraid to try new things. Dictatorship is quick and reduces discussion time, but it does create discontent. Collaboration, even though longer, brings about solutions that last” (p. 28).

Both participants believed that collaboration is indispensable if followers are to grow and develop as leaders. Collaboration offered constituents the opportunity to share and discuss ideas, and in the process boost their confidence for leadership. Both participants expressed their pride in the Catholic school system as a system that had given them the privilege of their education. In recognition of this opportunity, they felt it as part of their responsibility to help groom leaders to keep the system alive when they would relinquish their own leadership positions one day. The next section presents ways by which Angela and Denis promoted the growth of people.

Growth of People

Angela and Denis believed in the importance of every individual’s input as one of the ways to help followers grow. They reflected this conviction through the respect they accorded the opinions of staff and students in their school communities. Angela and Denis’ interest in the growth of people, especially their staff and students was demonstrated in the reciprocal positive comments they made about their staff, and vice

versa. For example, as a teacher left Angela's office, he remarked "You cannot talk or relate with Angela and continue to see only impossibilities, for Angela, there is almost always a way out" (p. 26). The positive effects of such affirmative comments on the staff member making the remarks cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, the persuasive power of those words in nurturing the growth of leadership qualities in constituents can be nothing less than positive.

On several occasions, Angela and Denis commented on the good work of some of their staff and assistant principals and that it showed promise of excellent future leaders. Denis demonstrated the genuineness of his comments when, during the ceremony of the principals' honor roll at St. Mark, an assistant principal led the ceremony with Denis helped to distribute certificates to deserving recipients. Angela manifested the same trust in her assistant principals by allowing one of them to lead the occasion of welcoming visitors to St. Jerome and presiding over the activities and the presentation made by the first female Canadian astronaut. During my observations, I noted that staff members reported committee activities to Angela and Denis. For Angela, allowing others to lead, not only on minor events, but also on major occasions were opportunities for their growth and development.

In addition to the above, Angela and Denis manifested their commitment to the growth of their staff by asking them personal questions with answers to be made in writing. After receiving the answers, they made time to talk individually with each staff member, and to direct them towards meeting their goals.

Positive and encouraging words to students were additional evidence of the commitment of Angela and Denis to the growth of their students. To a student who had

won a prestigious scholarship, Angela said, “I knew you could do it. There is nothing impossible if you set your mind to it” (p. 29). Both Angela and Denis showed their support for extra-curricular activities of students as these brought out the social skills of students and helped them in their self actualization. They respected the views and suggestions of students’ representative councils and encouraged them to develop decision making skills which they would find valuable in the future.

Community Building

According to Angela, her efforts at community building were based on trust. She reflected trust through her encouragement of staff and students in the following words, “I trust you can do it.” (p. 21). Angela assured the staff of her trust when they were charged with the responsibility of a committee or when they were new at teaching a subject. Students experiencing difficulties in a subject area were equally encouraged with the words “I trust you can do it.” Angela believed community building was possible where there was a trust relationship between leader and followers, because, with the existence of trust, people feel comfortable and are attracted to relate more easily with one another. She pointed out that trust was reciprocal. However, it could only be established through a period of working together. It is a kind of a give-and-take experience.

Angela’s commitment to community building was reflected in her repetition to staff and students that St. Jerome belonged to them all, and that their input was essential and very important. She often repeated the school vision to students, staff, and visitors. The vision of the school community as a family with every individual being acknowledged as important, and having a role to play in making the family stronger was a resounding idea of community building.

A test of strong community ties occurs when members leave the community and nostalgia makes them return to it. Two students who left St. Jerome the previous year for another school came back for readmission. When asked the reason for returning to St. Jerome, they admitted that they found it to be a home where everyone looked out for each other. They said, “We are back because this is home where everybody looks out for the other” (p. 27). Angela heartily welcomed them back and assured them that St. Jerome was their home where they will always be made welcome. She concluded by telling them, “I will look for you” (p. 27). She told them those words to assure them that she would be available to them, and again emphasizing that servant-leadership did not only imply formal relationships, informal relationships counted as well.

St. Mark, unlike St. Jerome, did not have a yearly school vision, but operated from its mission statement, “Our goal is to create and sustain a school community enlivened by the Gospel.” Denis often repeated this mission statement to staff. His passion for community building in St. Mark culminated in his asking staff members to evaluate the school. Some questionnaires used were:

1. Is the mission statement of the school clear?
2. Does the school provide a safe and orderly environment?
3. Does the school provide a climate of high expectation?
4. Does the school have a positive home and school relations?

The evaluation assigned the school a score of over 90% for its community building activities. One such activity is the distribution of Christmas hampers to needy families to inculcate in students concern for those less fortunate than themselves.

In both Sts. Jerome and Mark, the premium placed on prayer at the start of the school day, and at the beginning of staff meetings reflected a community at prayer. The opportunity for staff and students to pray with and for one another, for family members, friends, and acquaintances was indicative of the Catholic spirit of community in both school environments.

A Closer look at the Observation Participants

At the end of the four weeks' observation, I kept wondering whether or not the two observation participants differed in their exercise of servant-leadership apart from their difference in gender. I initially thought that the similarities manifested were dictated by their belonging to the same school division, and, with their schools located in the same city, there was the possibility of rehearsing the mode of dealing with people before arriving to school every day. Both participants espoused the 'open-door' policy which meant that people were always welcome to their offices for discussions without necessarily booking formal appointments. Angela and Denis indicated that the open-door policy was useful for dealing with situations, and left no room for procrastination. As well, it was a reliable approach that ensured the free flow of information that engendered healthy communication between principal and constituents.

Both participants exhibited similarities in their manner of showing respect towards students, staff, and parents. For example, they both chose their words carefully when communicating with parents on the phone, and almost always ended up by thanking them for calling to express their concerns. Angela and Denis always had either a word of encouragement, or asked students how they were doing. Angela's words of encouragement to a student who had won a prestigious scholarship and Denis' show of

concern for a student he considered a loner, and another student who looked sick attest to their respect for their students. Furthermore, both principals manifested their respect for students by allowing the grade 12 students to speak to their grade nine peers at their full-day and half-day retreats as an indication that older students had valuable ideas to share with their younger colleagues as their contribution to the growth of their school communities. The relationships and mentorship that seemed to be going on between both principals and their assistant principals was a finding made during the observation that the interviews did not reveal. The constant consultations that took place between principals and their assistant principals, and the leadership roles they were allowed to play were signs of mentorship and collaboration. Angela was always full of praise and appreciation to her assistant principals for their good work, and believed they would be excellent principals in the future.

Both participants displayed similarity as good listeners and empathizers. As good listeners, they exhibited patience by allowing staff members, students, and parents to express themselves before coming in with their contributions and asking their opinions. The question, “*so what do you think?*” was common with both participants. Angela, the more exuberant of the two, sometimes interrupted the speaker with humor or a helpful comment while Denis, in his calm and gentle manner, waited until the speaker had finished his/her story before coming in with what he thought was helpful.

Both respondents exercised leadership in ways that showed that they were committed to collaboration and community building. Their involvement of staff in various discussions that centered on students’ achievement, innovative teaching practices, and their interactions with both staff and students indicated their dedication to

collaboration and community building. Ways of promoting community building and collaboration included their presence in the staff room, participation in chats with staff members, asking staff members about students' progress, and requesting reports from committees for general staff discussion. The ease with which students approached both principals to greet them and vice versa as they toured their schools was an additional sign of community building where members showed mutual concern for one another. Prayer life punctuated the life of both schools. The spontaneity with which both participants promised to pray for people whose situations they thought needed prayers attest to their belief in Jesus Christ as the substance of their leadership. Both participants exhibited a sense of stewardship by the several tours they made of their schools each day. Through these tours, they made themselves visible to staff and students while creating the opportunity to talk one-on-one with them on the corridors and outside their offices.

The disparity between both participants however was the difference in their personalities. Angela was enthusiastic, exuberant, and full of energy and would occasionally be heard laughing joyfully in her office. Denis was rather gentle and calm, but both of them were excellent communicators who did not lack humor as they interacted with staff and students. They differed in the way they welcomed people to their offices. Angela often left her chair and desk to meet visitors while Denis welcomed them with a broad smile while standing at his desk. Angela seemed to 'infect' students, and staff members with joy and liveliness. In his gentle demeanor, Denis on the other hand, seemed to welcome people in ways that assured them that he was there to care for everybody in the school community. When a staff member asked him "Have you got time for me?" (p. 30), Denis readily answered, "I have got time for you" (p. 30). Denis never

seemed to stop talking about the need for mutual support as a useful engine for success for *ALL* students at St. Mark. He was happy to point out that Aboriginal students had a 95% success rate. Denis believed healthy relationships are the beginning of the achievement of success for all students.

As the data of my observation was mainly dictated by the activities taking place in each school during the observation period, I perceived Angela as a commitment to the growth of people oriented leader. She exhibited this through her encouragement of staff members to undertake various leadership roles such as chairperson of committees, encouraging teachers to share best teaching practices, sharing of the delivery of a talk on the re-culturation of St. Jerome with her staff members, and allowing staff members to take turns in leading morning prayers in the staff room. Regarding her encouragement of staff to take initiatives and share best teaching practices with each other, she said in one of her talks to the staff, “I love listening to, I have tried this and it worked” (p. 30).

Denis on the other hand was a relationship oriented servant-leader. He showed himself as a relationship oriented principal through his interactions with the school chaplain. He demonstrated his high regard for relationships by respecting the chaplain’s reservations about the suggestion put forth by a teacher that once in a month, students line the hallways holding hands in prayer in a symbolic community circle. According to Denis, he had the right to dictate what should be done, but as a servant-leader, he needed to respect the chaplain’s opinions to increase trust and good relationships between them. Thus he had to persuade the chaplain to give the suggestion a trial. His frequent visits to the classrooms, and the response of both teachers and students to his words of encouragement were indications of the good relationships that existed between principal

and the members of his school. A parent's comment to Denis that she believed it was because of his good relationships with her son that served as the genesis of great improvement in his academic work served as further evidence that Denis was a relationship oriented servant-leadership. Denis' own words signify his love and belief in relationships. He stated that he was not concerned about the academic performance of his daughter. His interest was in his daughter's relationship with her teacher. According to Denis, good relationships with students are the genesis of their academic success. In addition to the above, Denis occasionally bought lunch for his staff so that they could be together thereby solidifying their relationships with one another.

Reflecting on my experiences through the observation period, I conclude that despite differences in personality, the greatest demand of servant-leadership on school principals is service, care, and humility. Without these qualities, servant-leadership remains only a theory with no practical utility. These qualities help bring out the best in the servant-leader and his/her community, and legitimize the reason for leadership.

Summary of the Themes of the Observation

Included in this chapter are the following sections: a description of the schools of the two observation participants, a presentation of a day in the life of each of the observation participants, and a synopsis of the themes identified from the general observation data that complement the interview results.

Sts. Jerome and Mark were both Catholic high schools in Dog City located in the western and northern ends respectively. Both schools espoused the Gospel message as the guiding principle of their existence. Community building, based on Gospel values was important in both schools, thus, the principals of both schools endeavored to pattern their

leadership style on that of Christ, who “. . . did not come to be served; he came to serve” (Mark: 10: 45).

A description of a day in the life of each observation participant disclosed that in their exercise of leadership, both participants exhibited some of the ten characteristics of servant-leadership identified by Greenleaf (1977). Respondents identified other servant-leadership qualities such as forgiveness, prayerfulness, consistency, and honesty.

Analysis of the observation data revealed seven main themes that support similar themes identified in the interview data presented in chapter four: (a) service to the school community, (b) relationships as foundation for happier community, (c) care and support for students, staff and parents, (d) prayer life in the school community, (e) collaboration, (f) growth of people, and (g) community building.

From observing both participants, it was evident that their faith in Jesus Christ and their desire to serve as Christ the exemplar of servant-leadership was the reason for their leadership. Both participants demonstrated a commitment to service by assiduously working in their offices and serving as examples of hope and hard work to staff, students, and parents both in and outside of their offices. Participants demonstrated through various interactions with students, staff, and parents that their clear intention was the establishment of successful and happy school communities. As well, participants showed by action that they cherished collaboration, because collaboration is a practical way for constituents to learn and grow as future leaders.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study started with the suggestion that shifts in philosophies and theories of leadership have jettisoned traditional opinions about schools and educational leadership (Sackney and Mitchell, 2002) and that Catholic schools are no exception. For Crippen (2006) leadership that counts in today's schools is one that speaks to the values and emotions of followers and builds relationships with people in the school community. This kind of leadership eschews the traditional authoritarian paternalism in leadership and gravitates towards a morally-based leadership that cherishes stewardship and commitment to serve others and their ideals. With this leadership style, interest in nurturing followers to grow into leaders is very important. The model engenders stronger learning school communities with increased outcomes from students, staff, and parents to take initiatives for personal development. Greenleaf (1977) called this kind of leadership servant-leadership.

Servant-leadership offers hope and insight for a new epoch in human development and for the establishment of more caring institutions (Sergiovanni, 1992). The call of the Vatican II document *Gravissimum educationis* (1965) for Catholic education leaders to provide holistic Gospel-based education to children was an implicit call on Catholic school leaders to espouse a leadership style that promotes Gospel values. The reminder in the Vatican II document *Lumen gentium* (1964) for Catholic leaders to

view the purpose of hierarchy as service to the people of God was a clarion call for adoption of servant-leadership in Faith-communities wherever Catholic leadership is exercised.

This study acknowledged the changing context of the principalship in the Province of Saskatchewan, and encouraged acceptance of the democratization of society and the diversity and complexity which are part of the fabric of Western culture in which Catholic schools are embedded. This changing context calls for a relevant leadership style that is adaptable within a variety of environments. This style is servant-leadership, of which the relevance in the Catholic school context issues from the calling of Catholic administrators (*Lumen gentium*, 1965) to follow the example of Jesus Christ whose image and likeness they must reflect in their work (Walker & Scharf, 2001). While Greenleaf (1977) is responsible for popularizing the concept of servant-leadership, Jesus Christ has been acknowledged as its true source (Wilkes, 1998).

Service to constituents is the primary purpose of servant-leadership. This leadership model invests in the development of followers and in their well-being for the benefit of accomplishing duties and goals for the common good. Transactional leadership by contrast is the antithesis of servant-leadership in that it concentrates on the leader's power, rather than on the interest of the follower. On the other hand, transformational leadership focuses on organizational objectives whereas servant-leadership focuses on followers.

The study perceived the four dimensions of servant-leadership (Farling et al, 1999) as the parameters within which servant-leadership operates. Greenleaf's (1977) ten characteristics were identified as the essential day-to-day elements needed for servant-

leadership to be effective. I have presented a conceptual framework (Figure 2. 2) based on these four dimensions and the ten characteristics. The framework was not viewed as a priori (to be tested) construct to guide the discussion, but rather employed after respondents had presented their ideas as an analytic framework with which to arrange and analyze their constructions after initial interpretation and analysis.

While relevant to the contemporary school context, servant-leadership is not a cure-all for leadership problems. There are challenges and tensions identified as barriers, paradoxes, and possible downsides inherent in the adoption of servant-leadership. The practice of servant-leadership requires tenacity, perseverance, strength, and hope.

I assumed that as Catholic school leaders, the participants in this study practiced servant-leadership. Thus, I asked how randomly selected Catholic high school principals viewed servant-leadership and its effects in the life of their school communities using the following three research questions:

1. What are the sources and substance of Catholic high school principals' notions of servant-leadership?
2. What are Catholic high school principals' perceptions of their servant-leadership role?
3. How is servant-leadership manifest and experienced by Catholic high school principals in their daily professional lives?

I have used the constructivist/interpretive paradigm with qualitative case study as my research design (Hatch, 2002; & Creswell, 1998). Using the principals' lists provided by the superintendents of the Ronald and Colorado school divisions, I selected the four male participants of this study by simple random sampling (Charles, 1998). I chose the

two female participants by purposive sampling (Merriam, 1988) as there were only two female high school principals, one each in both school divisions. Two of the participants were later chosen to be observed for two weeks each. I combined categorical aggregation and direct interpretation in the analysis of data. In the former, I put events, happenings, and examples together and then identified patterns and themes. In the latter, I read the transcripts several times, interpreted the data, and came out with underlying patterns and themes. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research, and the research was carried out according to the Committee's prescribed standards.

For the purposes of this discussion, I will follow the order of the research questions: a) the sources and substance of Catholic high school principals' notions of servant-leadership, b) Catholic high school principals' perceptions of their servant-leadership role, and, c) how servant-leadership is manifest and experienced by Catholic high school principals in their daily professional lives.

Sources of Notions of Servant-Leadership

The literature is seemingly silent on how servant-leaders come by their notions of servant-leadership. This loud silence raises the question: Where do servant-leaders come by their notions of servant-leadership? Spears (2002) noted, "The idea of servant-leadership came partly out of Greenleaf's half-century of experience in working to shape large institutions" (p. 3). Likewise, the participants of this study partly attributed their notions of servant-leadership to their experiences from their professional work as teachers. Greenleaf (1977) acknowledged that his notions of servant-leadership were crystallized from reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East* (1971). A major finding

of my research is that notions of servant-leadership came to the principals from the inspiring exemplary leadership of people with whom they had worked. These leaders were former principals, directors, and professional colleagues, and priests. Added to these are the hiring practices put in place by their former directors. These findings indicate that leadership well exercised has positive ripple effects and creates generations of dedicated future leaders.

Participants indicated that before becoming teachers, they already had some notions of servant-leadership from their parents, early childhood upbringing, and interactions with their siblings. Neuschel (2005) argued that certain leadership qualities such as integrity, drive, and inner sense of responsibility are acquired early in life and contribute to shape an individual's future life as a leader. Neuschel's argument seemed to agree with the positive family background experiences of the participants of this study. Bob (2009) acknowledged the value of the influence of good leadership practices and exemplary family upbringing when he observed, "Imagine a world in which individuals who reflect the principles of servant-leadership lead our institutions. Visualize a community that is filled with citizens seeking to become Servant-Leaders. Dream of families where children are raised in an environment of Servant-Leadership" (p. 3). My findings suggest that principals and directors who exhibit exemplary leadership sow seeds of leadership in their followers, and that professional colleagues need to perceive the occasions they have to exchange useful information as contributing to the formation of others as future servant-leaders.

Two participants attributed their notions of servant-leadership to priests. The rest viewed them only as inspiring sources of their faith. An implication of this finding is that

in addition to serving as spiritual directors, priest chaplains in Catholic schools should perceive their good examples as contributing to the formation of potential servant-leaders by inspiring students and teachers. Another implication of my study is that the care, sacrifice, and the entire formation of a child's early upbringing constitute a valuable part of the child's future worldview about leadership. Thus Angela said, "I think more than anything, that is where I learned servant-leadership. From my family" (p. 4). Kahl (2004) expressed a similar view when he wrote, "The . . . values of a family, however big or small and whatever its composition, are the values of the future [servant]-leader. Whatever my mother and father modeled into the clay of my soul became my idea of what is right" (p. 17). In short, as parents sacrifice to provide and care for their children, they are simultaneously teaching them to learn to care for others. None of the participants mentioned negative family background experiences that served as indirect sources of their notions of servant-leadership.

Involvement in sporting activities was an added source of notions of servant-leadership. Simon and Angela were grateful for the leadership qualities they learned from coaching in sports. According to Simon, his engagement in coaching at an early age was an opportunity to learn the importance of collaboration and of relationships early in life. This points to the age-old recognition of the importance of extra-curricular activities in the life of students at school, and that leadership can also be learned under informal circumstances. Parenting was an additional source of the notions of servant-leadership for Simon, John, and Denis. Having to care for their own children taught them to care for other people's children in the same manner that they would wish others to care for their own children.

No participant attributed the sources of his/her notions of servant-leadership to his/her own intuition, awareness or special knowledge. This finding raises questions which seemingly go beyond the scope of this study: 1) Are the notions of servant-leadership only learned or acquired through the inspiring example and influence of others? 2) Could an individual become a successful servant-leader without having been inspired by some of the sources identified in this study or other exemplary servant-leaders? Beazley and Beggs (2002) seemed to provide a direction to investigate these questions when they wrote that practice is fundamental to the development of mature servant-leadership, and because the point of servant-leadership is to live more richly, fruitfully, and effectively, the practice aspect of apprenticeship is what makes an educational institution or business the perfect place to learn servant-leadership and discover its tangible concrete and intangible rewards.

Delellis (2000) observed, “Symbols are quite powerful in stimulating feelings related to the values which they represent” (p. 45). Symbols can also be impressive elements in the acquisition of the notions of servant-leadership. Deus (2000) noted, “Symbols suggest or point to some . . . reality beyond themselves” (p. 186). The practice of presenting symbols of servant-leadership - such as a rock, a towel, and a basin for washing the feet - provided a forceful image of servant-leadership for Denis. I vividly recall his explanation during my interviews with him. Retreats, workshops, and conferences organized at school division levels were also sources of participants’ notions of servant-leadership indicating that such activities had long-term effects on those who participated in them.

Essence of Servant-Leadership in Practice

Faith in Jesus Christ as the substance of the notions of servant-leadership was attested to and affirmed in all the interviews. All participants were emphatic that faith in Jesus Christ was the foundation of their leadership. This finding is congruent with *The National Congress'* (1992) intimation that "Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is rooted in an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ" (p. 34). Respondents perceived the challenge to proclaim the Good News of the Gospel in their school communities as the reason for their leadership, and that the content of the Good News is to humbly serve those entrusted to the leader, while developing in followers what they can potentially become. This finding raises the question: Is faith in Jesus Christ a *sine qua non* of servant-leadership? The participants felt that in the Catholic school context, the opportunity to exercise leadership implied faith in Jesus Christ, and they seemed to be guided by the observation of the Vatican II document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1990) and *The National Congress'* (1992) view that leaders in Catholic schools must be inspiring examples of faith in Jesus Christ.

The practice of praying for members of their school communities was seen as an extension of the injunction to live the Gospel value of concern for one another (John 13:34). For example, Terese kept a notebook in which she wrote the names of people she had promised to pray for as a sign that she lived daily her conviction that God and Jesus Christ were the foundation of her leadership. The personal involvement of Angela in prayer with staff members on Monday mornings in the staff room, and her promise to pray for staff members reflected a belief similar to that of Terese. In the context of the Catholic school, resorting to prayer or promising one's prayerful support as a leader

implies, *I empathize, I understand, I care, I am with you not only now, but until a solution is found to your problem*, and that faith in Jesus Christ is the substance of one's leadership. At St. Jerome and St. Mark, a full-day and half-day prayer and retreats respectively were organized for the newly arrived grade nine students indicating the importance of prayer as part of their school life. The organization of a retreat for the newly arrived students further echo Beazley and Beggs' (2002) observation that "A retreat at the beginning of the semester builds community . . . and establishes ground for group learning" (p. 60). Thus, early in their lives in both schools, through prayer and retreats, students are introduced to community building and the good practice of caring for one another.

Daily prayer over the intercom, before the beginning of classes, and at the beginning of staff meetings, were consistent with the observations of the Vatican II document *Gravissimum educationis* (1965) and Duignan (2007) that the promotion of Gospel values in Catholic schools must be an intentional choice. Reflecting this train of thought, *The National Congress* observed that "While serving the local church, Catholic schools are part of a larger whole, the universal church" (p. 10). Thus, the identification of faith in Jesus Christ as the substance of the principal's notions of servant-leadership reflects their willingness to exercise leadership as Catholic leaders, and this resonates with I Corinthians 3: 10-11 that Christ is the chief cornerstone and foundation of the church. Reflecting this idea, Terese said:

. . . being a principal in a Catholic school, it is wonderful to have to be able to express your faith, and to talk about it. . . . Some people . . . who deal [with] . . . very difficult communities, and difficult groups of kids, and show that by using faith, and using a servant-leadership approach to things, that they can bring kids around to developing a spiritual life and developing a better life for themselves. (p. 4)

Participants' trust in the essence of their faith as a source of success in their leadership harmonizes with William's (2002) observation that "Faith . . . assures the servant-leader that even in the midst of fear and confusion, amid turmoil and uncertainty, appropriate actions and responses will somehow be revealed" (p. 69).

Positive outcomes inspire people to action. This is what seemed to have happened to the participants of this study. Participants were heartened by positive results such as collaboration, community building, care for one another, and growth in their staff members and students. Terese was particularly happy to mention two teachers on her staff, one, a hardworking department head who accepted the position as a result of her support, and the other, an inflexible and strict teacher who gradually developed a better relationship with students. Also, students who began to love being at school because of the safe environment provided for them, and parents beginning to feel confident about their children were encouraging evidence for participants' practice of servant-leadership. Angela's experience of two students who left St. Jerome for another school and returned to seek admission because they did not find the new school welcoming was indicative of the fruits of her servant-leadership. These examples, and the participants' contented reaction, resonate with Batten's (1998) remark that, "Servant-leaders are proud of their lives and seek to enrich the lives of others by the richness of their own" (p. 40). In conclusion, servant-leaders are happy to serve the interest of their followers, and are encouraged to see them develop and grow. However, as participants indicated, immediate results are not the reason for their exercise of servant-leadership. The reason for servant-leadership is to provide a foundation for community building where meaningful learning

can take place for the good of the students' future, while staff members pursue their interests for growth, and parents are satisfied with the progress of their children.

Perceptions of Servant-leadership Role

Perception is a process through which people create meaningful experiences of their environment and their actions. These experiences form the basis of their ideas, influencing their behavior and their interactions with people. In sharing experiences, positive or negative, people inspire and teach each other. Participants in this study perceived their servant-leadership role as a gift and as a challenge. They presented metaphors and definitions that represented their views of the servant-leadership style.

Gift and Challenge

Participants cherished their principalship and saw it as being not for their own glory and aggrandizement, but for the service of their school communities. They expressed their love for the position, and considered it as a gift, and a challenge. They appreciated the freedom they had to express their faith within their school communities. In effect, love for one's job leads to an ardent desire to take up the challenge of the responsibility that comes with that position. The care, concern, and commitment to responsibility Angela and Denis demonstrated towards students, staff, and parents during the observation period attest to their love for their job. Through their love for the principalship, participants seemed to understand their responsibility as both a challenge and an invitation. This challenge and invitation is reflected in Blanchard and Hodges' (2005) call that Christian leaders live their faith both in church and at work, and in the invitation of *Lumen gentium* (1964) that Catholic leaders humbly serve the people of God

and lead them towards developing their potentials. In short, their leadership must contribute to providing hope for the people of God.

Participants thought that the principalship gave them a place for their passions, because it provided a better opportunity for them to serve students. The two participants who had a contrary view perceived the principalship as separating them from close contact with students. This finding points to the fact that all the participants of this study passionately cared for the welfare of students; the difference, however lies in individual perspectives of the most effective method or manner of caring for students.

Participants' Metaphors

Cadenhead and Fischer (2000) explained:

Metaphor, in a broad sense, is more than a rhetorical device . . . it is part of our lives. Frequently we define reality in terms of metaphors, and then we act on the basis of those metaphors. We draw inferences, set goals, make commitments, and execute plans at least partly in response to the metaphors we use – consciously and unconsciously – to structure our experience and solve problems that are part of our personal and professional lives. (p. 76)

Metaphors that best represented the participants' servant-leadership and their understanding of it were *patience, compassion, caring mother, a way of life, practicing what one preaches, and creating ripples through the larger community*. This variety of metaphors indicate that servant-leadership can be understood from different perspectives issuing from difference in personalities, but at its core the leadership model is based on care and concern for followers. The background stories of participants seemed to dictate their metaphors. For example, while Angela seemed to reflect the *patience* of her mother in raising her and her seven siblings, Gerald's metaphor of *compassion* suggested his experience of his father who changed from rigidity to compassion as he advanced during his years as a principal. Terese might have taken her metaphor of a *caring mother* from

her mother's dedication to raising her and her siblings. Denis probably viewed servant-leadership as *a way of life*, as a tribute to his mother's sacrificial and unselfish way of life that had contributed immensely in making him what he had become. He was impressed with the sacrifices of his single-parent mother and the foresight that led her to move to Saskatoon in order for her four children to benefit from university education. Thus, he described his mother as "My Mother Theresa". Having served under some excellent principals whom he found to be credible and trustworthy and from whom he learned practical leadership qualities such as care for constituents might have influenced John's metaphor of *practice what you preach*, while Simon's metaphor of *creating ripples through the larger community* probably issued from his sporting background. Despite the differences in metaphors, the central meaning is that of care and concern for followers.

The respondents' metaphors reveal altruism, care for others and role modeling, as outstanding denominators. The participants also stressed the need for role modeling which calls for them to be a moral voice in their schools as recommended by (Tschannen-Moran, 2004). The morality of the school principal is important because unlike other leadership styles that concentrate on productivity and cherish followers on the basis of their output, servant-leadership with its emphasis on the growth of followers demands the moral responsibility of the leader towards constituents. In the Catholic school environment where the focus is not only on academic formation of students as future responsible leaders, but also on their growth in faith, the morality of the principal cannot be overlooked. In addition, young teachers need a principal whom they can rely on as a dependable moral example for their future. McEwan (2003) pointed out, ". . . the most powerful force for building character in schools is derived from the lives of adults in that

school and most particularly, from the life of the principal” (p. 134). In short, good intentions of the staff, students, and parents are greatly molded by the character and behaviour of the principal.

Incumbents’ Definitions

As in the case of metaphors, participants proposed definitions of servant-leadership as *personal example, altruism, self-sacrifice, empowerment of followers, care for others, and making leaders out of followers*. In sum, servant-leadership is made relevant by its direct connection to serving the needs of followers. During their school day, Angela and Denis went on several tours through their schools talking with students and staff as they went along. Their ‘open door policy’ indicated their care and desire to serve by addressing issues as they occurred. Kahl (2004) argued, “Great leaders do not procrastinate – they solve problems in real-time, dealing with situations as they arise” (p. 59). The behaviour of Angela and Denis seemed to say, as long as I am in the school, I am here to serve with all my strength, mind, and soul, I must exhibit stewardship because I care for this community.

Expectations Held for Servant-Leaders in Catholic High Schools

According to Burkhardt and Spears (2002), awareness helps in the comprehension of issues and enables a leader to approach situations from a more integrated and holistic position. Participants were not unaware of the expectations their school communities held for them. They seemed to be convinced of Braye’s (2002) statement that when awareness provides truth, different actions that lead to the development and growth of communities and its members follow. Participants were not only aware of the expectations their school communities held for them, but they also put

those expectations into practice. According to the participants, their awareness of their school communities' expectations of them stemmed from the good relationships and open communication with people. I have categorized these expectations as general expectations, servant-leadership as a journey, nurturing dreams into visions and leaving a legacy of empowerment, building relationships, community building and seeking community from within, and building a culture of mutual support. Other expectations include compassion as spiritual authenticity, reciprocal value of service, community inspired vision, credibility through consistency, and sustained trust.

General Expectations Held by Parents, Staff, and Students

Participants indicated that in general, parents, staff, and students expected them to be enablers of people's potentials rather than punishers of wrongdoing. They are required to support the members of their school communities for the success of students. Simon pointed out:

Expectations of you will vary from individual to individual. Students are looking for an administrator that is fair is impartial, that is empathetic, and who can treat them respectfully and in a manner in which their dignity is intact. . . . I hope people see me as a support, with the ability to empower people so that the abilities they have . . . together with the ability others have . . . [we] can help to support each other's weaknesses. (p. 16)

Participants agreed that despite the occasional failures of parents, students, and staff, they expected to have a principal who supported them with the ultimate aim of building a successful school community for the success of students. The principals agreed that while their school communities were aware that imperfections would always remain a human factor in leadership, the general expectation held for them was that they exhibit leadership that brings hope to people. Thompson (2005) underlined the need for educational leaders to be sources and sustainers of hope in their various school

communities, in congruence with the observation of the Vatican II document *Gaudium et spes* (1965) that the future lies in the hands of those who can give their followers and tomorrow's generations reasons to live and hope.

John noted that students expected their principal to be caring, impartial, and empathetic, and to treat them with respect. Terese, Simon, and Gerald pointed out that staff members expected a leader who is organized, efficient, fair, impartial, non-judgmental, empathetic, and supportive, while parents preferred a principal who treated their children with respect, promoted their learning, made them grow, built positive relationships, communicated well, spoke from the heart, could be trusted, and in whose presence people felt comfortable. Other expectations included honesty and equity. For the principals, leadership that exists to serve its egotistic interest has no moral authenticity.

The joy with which parents of students on the principal's honor roll arrived at St. Mark to witness this ceremony attests to parents' expectations of success and growth for their children. Participants further indicated that parents, students, and staff expected to have a principal they could confide in. The findings indicated that school community members know exactly what their expectations of the principals of their school communities are. And success issues from the principal's awareness and appreciation of those expectations, and how he/she through collaborating with community members is able to implement them.

Servant-Leadership as a Journey

Lad and Luechauer (1998) observed, "To take a process orientation on your journey toward servant-leadership is to recognize that 90 percent of the joy stems from the work, not the outcome or results attained" (p. 61). Participants indicated that parents

and staff expected them to perceive servant-leadership as a journey, and an ongoing process, because students were in their formative years, and young staff members needed guidance to help them grow. Thus, patience is required, but it calls for dedication to work, with the understanding that the success to be garnered lies more in the process than in what the leader hopes to attain (Lad & Luechauer).

Denis and Terese pointed out that because of people's misunderstanding of servant-leadership as an on-going process, they had been accused of being too soft as they continued to give several opportunities to students to reform. Denis accepted this misjudgment and felt that not all constituents understood the import of servant-leadership. Because servant-leadership is a process, participants believed that it offers many possibilities for dealing with situations and that it implied respecting the opinions of others, and patience was of the essence. According to Terese, viewing servant-leadership as a process also meant that the leader benefited from its outcomes. As a result, as the years passed, she had developed an understanding that it was her reaction to people that mattered and not people's reaction to her. John and Gerald also acknowledged having benefited from their exercise of servant-leadership by their increased understanding of people. In general, participants perceived servant-leadership as a journey of both self discovery, personal growth, and appreciation of constituents and their situations. Participants' acknowledgement of having gained personally from their practice of servant-leadership harmonizes with Ruschman's (2002) contention that the servant-leader has "nothing to lose and everything to gain" (p. 139).

Denis' visit to the Farm school represented his perception of servant-leadership as an ongoing process that adds up to give a future and a hope to students. Part of this

process is offering the opportunity to students to learn at paces appropriate to their circumstances that gradually lead them towards developing their potentials. In sum, the servant-leader is challenged to have an eye and a heart that understands and enables people's potentials so as to help them develop and grow.

Nurturing Dreams into Visions: Leaving a Legacy of Empowerment

Acephalous societies are generally fraught with disorder and confusion, either because potential leaders have not been empowered to lead, or individuals have not been nurtured to cherish leadership. Participants seemed to understand that for their school communities to continue succeeding, other people needed to be empowered to grow into future leaders. DeSpain (2000) explained that the legitimacy of the servant-leader lies in the fact that he/she is first empowered by those being led so that he/she can then “define reality for all, nurture dreams into visions of new reality, and then redistribute the power and authority he/she has received from those led” (p. 68). Empowerment arises as servant-leadership moves away from self-centeredness to serve the interests of followers. According to Simon, ways of empowering constituents included giving them leadership opportunities, and respecting their opinions so as to give them confidence.

While participants appreciated the examples of excellent principals and directors, negative authoritarian leaders were an added impetus for John, Gerald, Simon, and Terese to stay clear of the top-down style of leadership which they considered as stifling initiatives and growth of followers. John and Simon indicated that students were empowered by a principal's presence at their extra-curricular activities and students' representative council meetings. For Denis, other ways of empowering students included, (with some guidance), allowing them to make decisions regarding their outing for

different activities outside the school. The rationale for this action was to avoid obliging students to live by compliance and to challenge them to learn responsibility as part of the growth process. Showkeir (2002) observed “Compliance does not create passion. Compliance does not make individuals wiser. Compliance does not encourage choosing accountability” (p. 158). According to Denis, if students are allowed to cherish the responsible use of freedom, they would be learning a valuable lesson that would serve as leverage for them to create meaning and purpose for the rest of their lives.

In Gerald’s view, involving staff members on committees was a good way to empower them. As well, empowerment included the encouragement of staff and students to take initiatives that were beneficial to the school community. To empower members of the school community, it is important that the leader cultivate a healthy ego and a robust self-image so as not to perceive budding leaders as a challenge to his/her authority. Kahl’s (2004) observation is pertinent here. He observed, “The job of the leader is to grow leaders at all levels . . . The only true measure of success for a leader is the creation of a legacy that survives his absence” (p. 108).

Angela and Denis gave leadership roles to staff members to share best practices in teaching, and allowed their assistant principals to preside not only over minor ceremonies, but also over major ones. A finding during my observations which did not surface in the interviews was the interaction between the principals and their assistant principals. The frequent reciprocal consultations and interactions between Angela and Denis, and their assistant principals were evidence of mentorship. Restine (1997) underscored the importance of mentorship. Concurring, Calabrese and Tucker-Ladd (1991) argued that a mentoring relationship between the principal and assistant principal

builds a synergistic activity where the assistant principal is informally nurtured into administration.

Building Relationships

Kahl (2004) observed, “In the end, the world revolves around relationships between people . . .” (p. 26). Participants perceived relationships as crucial for the growth of their school communities. Thus, Denis said, “relationships are very important, contacting people makes a lot of difference” (p. 26). To Terese, servant-leadership was all about relationships because that was the way to nurture trust as a requisite for a happy school community. Participants’ general view was that, where the leader rates relationships as secondary to his/her power, fear overrides human initiative and the human spirit atrophies into quiescence, with hope remaining an unattainable dream. When asked why she greeted students as she walked through the corridors of St. Jerome, Angela said “Just a simple good morning could be healing for them for the day if they have had a bad beginning of day” (p. 26). Angela further explained that greetings might be seen as simple but very important for establishing relationships.

Angela and Denis demonstrated that relationships were not only limited to formal conversations, and that informal discussions helped engender relationships, because they solidified trust and opened up avenues for stronger relationships. Approachability was an additional strength of both Angela and Denis. The ease and confidence with which staff, parents, and students related with Angela and Denis indicated that accessibility to a school principal was crucial for success in relationships and image building of constituents. Ease of accessibility to school community members however did not imply the need to be liked and be a friend to everybody. But approachability served as a reliable

avenue for information flow between leader and constituents without which mistrust could become a possibility. In effect, approachability involves humility which according to Thompson (2005) entails the leader making himself/herself available to followers enough to increase his/her awareness since even in our so-called areas of expertise, we do not have all the answers. According to Angela, for healthy relationships to exist between leader and constituents, it is important for the leader to keep constantly in mind that “Leadership is no more the boss telling everybody what they should do” (p. 25).

Participants stressed the need for respect for followers as an essential ingredient for stronger relationships. As Angela and Denis ended their day’s work at school, their style of interacting and relating with members of their school communities seemed to resonate with Autry’s (2004) reflection that, “. . . when I did it well today, it’s always been relationships, even if it was just convening a good meeting filled with ideas and energy” (p. 54).

Community Building: Seeking Community from Within

Participants viewed community building as a *sine qua non* for success in servant-leadership. They seemed to have a clear understanding of Greenleaf’s (1977) observation that an organization lacking its own sense of internal cohesion could not be oriented to serve, therefore, the first challenge is to seek community from within. Angela, Gerald, Terese, and John underscored the fact that a lot of effort was needed for community building because of a possible misunderstanding of the leader’s intention, or the uncooperative attitude of detractors. Suggestions for community building included the principal’s participation at meals with members of his/her school community, social activities of staff and students, celebration of successes and moments of joy and pain,

graduation ceremonies, praying together and celebrating liturgical activities including Masses. Other suggestions for community building included support for students, staff, and parents during illness and death, and availability of the principal to teachers, students, parents, and the school community at large. According to John, all the activities identified as ways of building community demanded the principal's visibility. Stressing the need for the leader's visibility, Neuschel (2005) stated, "The impact of leadership is a necessary ingredient and personal presence among your people is often the most powerful way to reinforce this" (p. 98). People are interested in relating and feeling the presence of the person they are to look up to, particularly a leader of the school.

Angela and Denis viewed their constant reference to either their school vision or the mission statement as a rallying point for community building, and as a reminder that in a school community, there was the need to be guided by a common objective. Praying before the start of school, before staff meetings, and on Monday mornings were also signs of community building. Prayers were not only said for people present, but also for the needs of all members of the school community. Prayer sessions and the content of prayers indicated that faith in Jesus Christ was a cherished value in the Catholic school community. In general, participants' views about community-building resonated with Beazley and Beggs' (2002) remark that "Servant-leadership is inclusive rather than exclusive, devoted to community building rather than to isolation" (p. 59). In sum, respondents' perceptions of community-building seemed to suggest that the varied and different backgrounds of the members of their school communities was not a barrier to community-building because building community is the answer to understanding and appreciating one another for the success of each individual.

Building a Culture of Mutual Support

Participants stressed that community building is unsustainable without support for one another. For Angela, this support for one another implies opening one's eyes to the needs of the weak in the immediate environment. She called for a new way of examining the beatitudes, as the way to dispel complacency and self sufficiency, as these destroy community building. Support for one another in light of the beatitudes is an invitation for the strong to look out for the weak in the school community, where the strong protect the weak while viewing the weak as essential members of the school community.

According to Denis and Simon, support for one another implies the principal's support for staff and students in ways that meet their interests. Support for students is not only academic success, but also the acquisition of social skills, emotional balance in relationships, spiritual maturity, and physical development leading to their holistic development. Support further means listening to parents, and cooperating with them to enhance the learning and other needs of their children to bring them hope. Neuschel (2005) proffered advice to leaders who wish to elicit the support of their constituents. He wrote, "Leaders get support because they give support to others. . . . By believing in people, you increase the possibility that others will believe in you. So it is with support" (p. 39).

Stewardship forms part of mutual support, and it demands interacting with people, helping them, and leaving them better than they were. Gerald suggested a deeper understanding of stewardship as innovativeness and creativity towards the environment and the promotion of renewed relationships with one another, thus calling on school community members to treat the environment and each other with respect. Additional

avenues for support for one another in the Catholic school community include involvement in liturgical and charitable activities as ways of galvanizing students' efforts and helping them learn to look and think beyond themselves and have a consideration for the wider human society.

Concrete examples of support for students were Angela's magnanimity in driving a student to and from school because the student's parents were unable to afford bus passes for her, and the support she gave to another student who became pregnant. Referring to the pregnant girl, Angela said, "We need to be sensitive enough to be able to help seemingly hopeless cases like this one" (p. 24). Denis' care and concern for a student he considered a loner, and his constant visits to the classrooms of the special needs students, are further examples of supporting students in the school community.

Compassion as Spiritual Authenticity

Renesch (2002) pointed out that a compassionate understanding of followers helps the leader to eliminate the need to attack, to defend, or to engage in destructive politics at work. All participants seemed to have been inspired by Renesch's thinking. They stressed the need for compassion in leadership and as an expectation their school communities held for them. It was no wonder that Gerald's metaphor for servant-leadership was *compassion*. Simon saw the link between compassion and spiritual authenticity as important elements of the growth of the school community when he pointed out, "The exact formula for success is not here. It is work in progress. By compassion, caring and faith-filled activities our community grows" (p. 21).

It seemed that participants had learned from past mistakes of rigidity and the blunders of other leaders. Interestingly, although all participants believed compassion

was necessary, it was the two female participants who provided a caveat to leaders to be wary of the possible abuse of compassion by negligent followers. Angela and Terese indicated that compassion did not mean allowing followers to dictate the state of affairs in the school community irresponsibly, as there need to be limits sets for order to prevail.

Gerald stressed the need for compassion by relating his experience with neophyte teachers. According to him, some neophyte teachers espoused rigidity at the beginning of their teaching careers, but gradually incorporated compassion in their dealings with students as they gained experience in relationships. Probably, for Catholic high school principals for whom Jesus is the foundation of their leadership, it is worth remembering Thompson's (2005) words that "Compassion is an important measure of spiritual authenticity, and it's essential to spiritual leadership [in] . . . education" (p. 47).

Reciprocal Value of Service

Participants were unanimous about the need for service in servant-leadership. For example, two participants observed, "Service helps you develop servant-leadership. And if you weren't a servant-leader then you wouldn't probably serve others" (Denis, p. 10). "Servant-leadership is all about moving away from yourself. Moving away from the ego-centric. To really be idea of service for others" (Simon, p. 15). DeSpain (2000) seemed to capture participants' ideas about the need for service when he said:

The person who thinks himself or herself a leader and expects to behave in a manner as the "boss" of yesteryear is likely to find little demand for his or her services. Further, our society is in far greater need of a leader who is willing to serve, . . . than a leader who wishes to boss. (p. 11)

Participants understood that the reason for their principalship was service to the members of their school communities, for without service, there was no reason for their leadership.

McCollum's (1998) story about Frankl's experience in the Nazi concentration camps serves to explain the reflections of participants about the need for service. He recounted that as a prisoner in the camps, Frankl observed that those confined apparently adopted one of two methods. While some put their energy into surviving, others concentrated theirs on serving other prisoners. According to Frankl, "It was the latter group that survived while the former perished" (p. 330). While Frankl's example is not an exact fit in the school context, it explains participants' views about service. In short, service to constituents has reciprocal advantages for the leader who serves faithfully.

Angela and Denis demonstrated that, in serving their school communities, no job was too insignificant to engage their attention. They showed this through helping with the decorations of their schools to welcome visitors. For Denis, apart from many other examples of good relationships and collaboration, it was also through simple acts of picking up garbage as he toured the school.

Community-Inspired Vision

All participants stressed the need for vision as an important expectation of their school communities of them. Respondents echoed Daniels and Daniels (2007) that "The purpose of a vision . . . is to provide the context people need to give value to the daily tasks they must complete" (p. 145). It was the general view of participants that vision is the engine for growth and movement forward in the school community, but the leader's vision can only succeed if it is supported and encouraged by those around him/her.

An important finding which I appreciated in the course of observing Angela is that, while it is the leader's task to develop a vision (Williams, 2002), it does not necessarily mean the vision has to come directly from him/her. It is however the leader's

responsibility to facilitate the vision and give credit to followers who help crystallize that vision. This situation is only possible where the leader has learned to empower his/her followers. Kahl's (2004) observation is pertinent here:

[The leader] can accomplish great success if he doesn't care who gets the credit. . . . Many leaders certainly bring an ego to various aspects of their lives; it is an inevitable weakness of humanity to get caught up in the trophies, trappings, and the need to proclaim our success to others; but the most effective leader sets these egotistical tendencies aside. (p. 109)

In sum, it is important that the leader does not replace the community's vision with an inordinate desire for his/her fame or credit. The important thing must be that a task has been accomplished that best serves the interest of the community.

Participants emphasized that the success of a vision depended very much on the followers, but this was only possible if it was a shared vision where the credit was also shared. Simon explained, "If there is success in the school, it is not administration that creates it. It is rather the front line teachers that create the success of the school" (p. 20). Senge (1990) provided an explanation of why members of the school community participate in a shared vision. He said:

A shared vision is not an idea. . . . It is rather a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power. . . . It is palpable. People begin to see it as it exists. Few if any forces are as powerful as a shared vision. (p. 206)

In short, a shared vision propels people to action, because they can feel and understand it as relevant to their aspirations. Expressing his conviction about the need for a vision to be a shared one, John said, "I think you need to ensure that your vision is set within your school and within what you do within that school" (p. 9). Mulligan (2003) seemed to provide the answer when he said, ". . . leadership is the capacity to influence the behavior of others to work together for a common project and to be passionate about a shared

vision” (p. 113). Participants indicated that qualities needed to achieve one’s vision in the school community were listening, empathy, persuasion, stewardship, community building, commitment to growth of people, collaboration, mutual support, forgiveness, compassion, tenacity, courage, innovativeness, and wisdom. At the base of all these qualities is faith in Jesus Christ, because faith serves as the source of strength when one feels overwhelmed with challenges (Williams, 2002).

Credibility through Consistency and Authenticity

Posner and Kouzes (1996) argued, “Personal credibility is the foundation on which leaders stand . . . if you don’t believe in the messenger, you won’t believe the message” (p. 5). John seemed to summarize participants’ ideas about credibility. He viewed credibility as: “talk the talk and walk the talk” (p. 8) In other words, “People believe in actions more than in words, in practices more than in pronouncements” (Posner & Kouzes; p. 7). Participants echoed Neuschel’s (2005) idea on credibility that, “If we want to have followers who follow freely, and willingly, they must believe that the leader has interest in and affection for them” (p. 96). According to participants, credibility could be talked about, wished, and desired, but it cannot be achieved if the leader does not exhibit certain characteristics. Some of these characteristics include listening, empathy, awareness, commitment to growth of people, community building, support and care for constituents, fostering good relationships with followers, admitting mistakes, humility, visibility, prayerfulness, good communication, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, forgiveness, compassion, consistency, collaboration, fairness, respect for others, sharing successes, expression of appreciation for good efforts, and openness. In effect, participants seemed to be saying that good intentions are not enough, they are only felt

and experienced through concrete actions exhibited through the above mentioned characteristics. For example an honest and consistent leader who collaborates and respects followers paves the way for community building where healthy relationships serve as fuel for hope and success.

Sustained Trust

An important finding was that position does not necessarily engender trust. People expect to have a leader they can trust. Angela observed, . . . “you can’t assume just because you are the principal, people will trust you, you can’t” (p. 13). In other words, the leader’s actions must conform to his/her words. Lester and Brower (2003) argued, “If trust is a psychological state held within the trustor . . . , it may not call the trustee into action until the trustee perceives the trust” (p. 17). In effect, trust was a necessary condition for members of the school community to open up to the principals and collaborate with them. Posner and Kouzes (1996) added their voice to the need for trust when they said, “A trusting relationship between leaders and constituents is essential to getting extraordinary things done” (p. 6). Caring and showing kindness were seen as necessary ingredients for gaining trust. According to participants, trust could be earned through listening, empathy, commitment to the growth of people, confidentiality, visibility, support and respect for followers, kindness, good relationships, collaboration, compassion, gentleness, and role modeling. John pointed out that trust is the element needed for a new principal to be accepted in his/her new school environment in order to build an effective leadership team. Participants seemed to agree with Lowe (1998) that trust is a journey and not a destination, and it can be gained through consistency. Denis observed “it takes a while to build that trust” (p. 11), and trust is earned if followers see

that the leader's concern is not just about him/herself, but about service to the school community. Trust however is not a one way communication. John suggested it is the leader's responsibility to trust constituents first as trust engenders trust. Houston and Sokolow (2006) pointed out the need for leaders to be the first to trust followers when they wrote:

Trust is to people as water is to plants – everyone needs just the right amount to thrive. As a leader, you are in a position to dispense a lot of trust – or not. One of the by-products of dispensing trust is that it is truly empowering, which is one of the reasons it is such a fundamental principle of enlightened leadership. (p. 130)

In sum, trust can be compared to an enabling invitation, because it serves as the fuel that gives motive force and progress to relationships in communities. According to Houston and Sokolow the reason the leader must be the first to trust is that most people are capable of responding positively. Trust, according to DePree (2002) is the grace that enables followers to be creative. There may however be exceptions because some people may not respond adequately to trust, but it is important that the leader does not generalize. The choice to trust will always remain the leader's.

Manifestations of Servant-Leadership

As discussed in previous sections, most participants' experiences of their servant-leadership role are reflected in the expectations their school communities have for them. Servant-leadership is for the service of followers (Autry, 2004). It was manifested in participants' professional lives in two major ways. First, in the different possibilities offered for constituents to develop. Second, in the collaboration of staff, students, and parents, as demonstrated through their willingness to take up leadership roles for the good of their school communities.

Offer of Different Possibilities for Constituents to Develop

Participants agreed with Gerald's observation that, "We will not give up on somebody. They have to give up on themselves" (p. 10). Concurring with Gerald, Angela said, to help the child to grow, "[demands the leader] never giving in, guess, never giving up on a kid or a person, and knowing that they are going to get better, they will evolve and become stronger" (p. 6). The principals indicated that they offered opportunities to constituents to take responsibility for their own actions because an important aspect of servant-leadership is to help the follower learn to be responsible, and to provide hope for followers. Forgiveness was seen as an example of looking for multiple opportunities to serve constituents. Forgiveness means hope for the constituent as he/she is allowed to start all over with a future full of possibilities and hope.

Seeking to understand individuals was another way to help followers grow. According to Angela, Terese, Simon, and John, the willingness to understand people helps the leader to deal with followers in ways that best serve their interests. Gerald indicated that offering different opportunities for followers to develop and grow implied allowing hard working staff members who had opportunities to pursue other interests elsewhere to do so if that would enhance their growth. For Denis, it might involve helping under-performing staff members and students who seem not to fit in the normal school system to relocate to other schools if that would lead to their eventual growth.

Respondents, however, suggested that servant-leadership does not offer blueprints for success in dealing with varying situations, but faith in Jesus Christ was a source of inspiration in facing dilemmas. Apart from participants' common faith in Jesus Christ being a great support in their dealings with the different situations, Beazley and Begg's

(2002) observation is relevant here. They pointed out that although the concept of servant-leadership is simple, “. . . its execution is not. Its expression is always based on individualized experience based on the person’s unique set of talents and skills” (p. 56).

Denis’ interest in the Farm school students, and his visit to the school was evidence of his conviction of the value of offering different opportunities to students to succeed. I was deeply touched by the attitude of one of the students of St. Mark who was being relocated to an alternate school. The student gladly accepted to relocate because of the background work Denis and his assistant principals had undertaken to help the student understand why she was being asked to move to that school. Before leaving for the alternate school, the student expressed optimism about returning to St. Mark soon, thus exhibiting the kind of hope the servant-leader in the school context inspires in followers.

Collaboration as Vehicle for Servant-Leadership

Like Autry (2002), respondents were of the view that today, the era of the single decision maker is anachronistic. Simon pointed out that his experiences of the outcomes with autocratic leaders had generally been ephemeral and oppressive. In their own practice, all respondents had come to appreciate collaborative leadership as valuable in eliciting mutual respect and support for one another in the school community. Participants’ thoughts on collaboration suggested that they agreed with DePree (2002) that “. . . organizations stand a better chance of reaching their potential when the gifts of everyone are brought to bear on reality than when an organization limits itself to the gifts of a few people at the top” (p. 92).

Collaboration involves respecting the opinions of others, leading to stronger school communities because followers feel empowered. Angela, Simon, Denis, and Gerald felt that, although collaboration could at times become burdensome due to the longer time demands in arriving at decisions, it was their preferred method because it was a reliable way to the empowerment of followers. Participants acknowledged that because of the intensity of its time demands, collaboration involved hard work. As Walls (2004) observed:

Collaboration is not handing out paintbrushes so others can paint your fence. It is not an example of “many hands make light work,” nor is it an example of “too many cooks spoil the broth.” It is hard work. It is very hard work. It is worthwhile work. It is worthwhile because it makes good things happen. (p. 131)

The general view of participants was that ways of sustaining collaboration included the leader’s humility, setting good example, willingness to serve, staying clear of public reprimands in the event of mistakes, engaging in conversation with members of the school community regardless of status, words of encouragement from the leader, approachability of the leader, ability to establish positive relationships, and the leader’s ability to tender apology when the occasion demanded it.

By delivering a talk together with four of her staff members, at a professional development day with other staff members, Angela clearly showed the wisdom of collaboration. First, collaboration has the advantage of making burdens light. Second, it goes beyond merely respecting people’s opinions. It involves giving credit to people for their ideas and contributions. Third, collaboration is a good avenue for teaching constituents that everybody in the community needs to contribute to the leadership of the community (Greenleaf, 1977). In effect as Thompson (2005) observed, collaboration connotes a reminder that the quest for power, prestige, or material rewards is not the

focus of servant-leadership, because arguably, educational leadership that espouses servant-leadership offers comparatively little in terms of prestige, power, or material rewards. Rather, it focuses on building a common vision, sharing information, acknowledgement of interdependence, learning from past mistakes, encouraging innovative input from every team member, and questioning existing assumptions and mental models. Collaboration in effect, creates a sense of community where support for one another and continuous learning can take place. According to Denis, “It is the willingness to stand up for your neighbor, it is the willingness to pray for people. It is about being there for somebody else. . . .” (p. 13).

In sum, participants’ ideas about collaboration seemed to echo Greenleaf’s (1997) challenge to servant-leaders: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants. . . . Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?” (p. 27). Collaboration, according to the findings of this study, is the process through which followers are made to feel they are cherished, and that they have valuable contributions to make towards the growth of their communities because leaders do not have monopoly of all the excellent ideas.

Experiences of the Servant-Leadership Role

The general feeling of participants was that of satisfaction in their role as servant-leaders. However, their experiences can be considered as positive and negative.

Positive Experiences

Words of gratitude from staff members, students, and parents were heartwarming to participants. John pointed out:

Very simple things, to begin with. Getting a thank you from a student, or from a staff member. Or having a former student come back and say *thank you*, you provided me with a great deal of opportunity. You set a tone, you set an example for me. You have helped me accomplish this. Having a parent come to you and say you know what, I am so appreciative of the fact that you worked with my son or daughter and got him/her involved in such and such a program. It has been such a benefit to them. (p. 3)

Even though reward was not the reason for participants' servant-leadership role, positive comments re-enforced them in their service of their school communities. Batten (1998) intimated, "gratitude puts it all together. . . . It provides us with . . . [the] reciprocity that further nourishes and increases the amount of faith, hope" (p. 51) in us.

The willingness and generosity of school community members to console and support bereaved members were seen as positive. The readiness of staff members to take up leadership challenges was also appreciated. In St. Jerome, two teachers agreed to share their best practices in teaching with other teachers while Angela sat among the teachers to listen.

John and Terese acknowledged that the positive experiences associated with their servant-leadership role were not only about the change for good which they saw in members of their school communities, they themselves benefited from their practice of the leadership model. Terese noted:

I think that . . . that really helped me gain an understanding of the importance of allowing God to control your life. And I think that put a perspective in my head that allowed me to gain a better understanding of what is meant by servant-leadership. That we control what we can control, but we need to let go what we need to let go of, and that we need to be able to understand what other people are feeling, and help them understand what we are trying to get across to them. (p. 4)

Terese seemed to imply that servant-leadership leads to a discovery of the self and a reliance on the power of faith in Jesus Christ for wisdom for better service to her school community. For John, his practice of servant-leadership has helped increase his

participation in church activities. John and Terese's experiences seemed to indicate that service to the People of God based on the strength of faith is simultaneously the source of a better understanding of one's faith and service. If servant-leadership was valuable for participants in the building of their faith commitment, it was also useful in their personal development and increase in the virtue of equanimity. In this regard, Denis observed, "I think servant-leadership is . . . how to react to situations. The calmness, the quiet . . . [and] that comes from being a servant to the people" (p. 12).

All participants were happy about the development of altruistic tendencies in the students and staff of their schools. This unselfish demeanor was evident in the form of their joyous involvement in the distribution of Christmas hampers and enthusiastic engagement in various philanthropic activities including the program of Christian service hours. In the words of Angela the generous disposition towards others "epitomizes servant-leadership" (p. 6). Participants were heartened by the fact that, both the needy and the affluent in their schools come together to show concern for others. The willingness of stronger students to stand up for the weak when the latter were being maltreated by their peers was for Terese a sign that the practice of servant-leadership in her school community was yielding fruits. The laudable action of the stronger students reflect Greenleaf's (1977) observation that the forces of good and evil are propagated by the thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes of individuals. What our values for our future civilization become will be greatly shaped by the ideas of [servant-leaders] that are born of inspiration. In sum, as leaders inspire followers to take on caring attitudes, they learn to stand up for their colleagues even in the absence of their leaders.

Negative Experiences

This study found that servant-leadership is not a panacea for all problems. The ego sometimes served as a challenge by creating inner tension that hinders the exercise of selfless servant-leadership. The interruption of the self in the exercise of servant-leadership challenges the honest servant-leader that servant-leadership is no guarantee for total freedom from the ego. The occasional disappointment brought about by the failure of people to take up the challenge of empowerment was sometimes frustrating to Denis, Simon, and Angela. This situation means that while it is necessary to respect the opinions of followers, it is not every follower that feels comfortable playing active leadership roles. Some constituents may be at ease in playing supportive roles rather than in being at the forefront. In the face of unwilling followers, Neuschel's (2005) reminder to servant-leaders is worth considering. He wrote, "The ultimate test of the servant-leader is to work constructively with the half-people who are part of all organizations" (p. 99). In this regard, Kahl (2004) said, being a [servant-leader] is not about arriving quickly at a destination, "It is about hanging in there when times get tough" (p. 61). The old saying that calm seas do not make great captains seems applicable here. Braye (2002) observed characteristics that afford individuals to be effective servant-leaders are "... love- toward self, others, and all that one touches" (p. 295).

Participants were unanimous in indicating that servant-leadership is time-intensive. Thus, John and Gerald noted that a desire to serve one's school community well without taking care of one's self could lead to adverse repercussions. For example, there is a tendency to neglect one's family and concentrate on effectiveness in administration without seeking a balance between the two. There is also the inclination to

overlook the need for physical exercise as a result of the demands of overwhelming administrative work.

Strategies for Success in Servant-Leadership

As to strategies needed for success in servant-leadership, participants identified tenacity, respect for members of their school communities, cherishing collaboration, caring for followers, avoidance of needless reprimands in the event of failure, and developing trust in followers. Angela indicated that achieving success in servant-leadership also involves respecting staff members to such an extent that the leader avoids embarrassing them in front of students or parents.

Like all leadership styles, servant-leadership has its detractors. Denis suggested that the way of dealing with irresponsible dissenters from the school community's vision is, "Just keep doing it" (p. 16). For Angela, "It is okay to ask for help, it is not a sign of weakness" (p. 16). And for Simon, "The best approach is, . . . encouragement, appreciation, notes of support, notes of thanks Avoiding only reprimanding when things have gone wrong, personal conversation, not public confrontation" (p. 16). The comments indicated that there will always be dissenters in school communities. However, in the face of dissenters, Kahl (2004), borrowing Margaret Mead's words suggested, "Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has" (p. 61). The servant-leader needs to keep in mind that not yielding to uncooperative members of the school community is the way to success.

According to Angela, in order to give people opportunities to present themselves in a better light, especially in the event a constituent is angry, in the case of a student, the best solution is to walk away and offer them another chance when they have calmed

down. The understanding here is that as an adult, and servant-leader, the principal must know better how to give opportunities for followers to learn and grow.

Conceptual Framework Revisited

After analyzing and discussing the data, elements of servant-leadership emerged that warrant revisiting the original conceptual framework. The initial conceptual framework (Figure 2.2) delineated four dimensions of servant-leadership as vision, credibility, trust, and service as the major propelling attributes of servant-leadership. Consistent with the model of servant-leadership of Farling et al. (1999), I determined that the dimensions take their roots from the leader's mental models, motivations, passions, values, beliefs, and professional convictions, and grow through the influence of his/her vision, credibility, trust, and service. The other three dimensions lead to service as the center of the leader's activities. The process rejuvenates itself in an endless journey as represented by the inverse and continual flow of arrows in the diagram (Figure 2. 3). The framework also contained Greenleaf's (1977) ten characteristics of servant-leadership considered as the essential day-to-day elements of servant-leadership in a community. The spiral form of this framework signifies the capacity of the school community to expand.

However, based on my analysis of the interview data and observations, I have identified faith in Jesus Christ as the foundation of participants' servant-leadership, and childhood upbringing as an additional antecedent of servant-leadership. I have included these in Figure 6. 1. The antecedents provide an identity that propels the individual towards servant-leadership. Service remains the central dimension of the framework, because, without it, servant-leadership is meaningless (Sergiovanni, 2000). I made this

change to correct the apparently linear understanding of the original diagram as a ladder with the dimensions building upon each other or leading one to the other. The understanding here is that, from the leader's mental models, motivations, passions, values, beliefs, professional convictions, childhood upbringing, and identity, he/she, through faith in Jesus Christ, could move to service, and through service, clarify or strengthen the other dimensions consequently leading to a better service to the community. Also, through faith, it is possible to move to trust, and then to service, and to move from faith to vision, to credibility, to trust, and then to service. Again, the servant-leader could advance from faith to vision and then to service, and while rendering service strengthen the other dimensions. It is important that the diagram not be interpreted as one dimension leading to another in a linear fashion. Identity is considered as an iceberg with the characteristics presented in the triangle forming the tip.

The basic understanding here is that servant-leadership is established and strengthened in the very act of rendering service. Thus, one does not have to wait to gain credibility or trust before commencing service to his/her community, because the very act of serving is the way to gain credibility, trust, and a clarification of one's vision for better service. The reversible arrows suggest that servant-leadership is not only an endless journey, but also a model that revitalizes and rejuvenates itself through the inspiration that comes from service. Other components of the framework are the day-to-day characteristics required to make servant-leadership effective and are presented in Table 6.1. The components were derived from participants' answers to follow up questions regarding what they believed to be important servant-leadership characteristics apart from the ten identified by Greenleaf (1977).

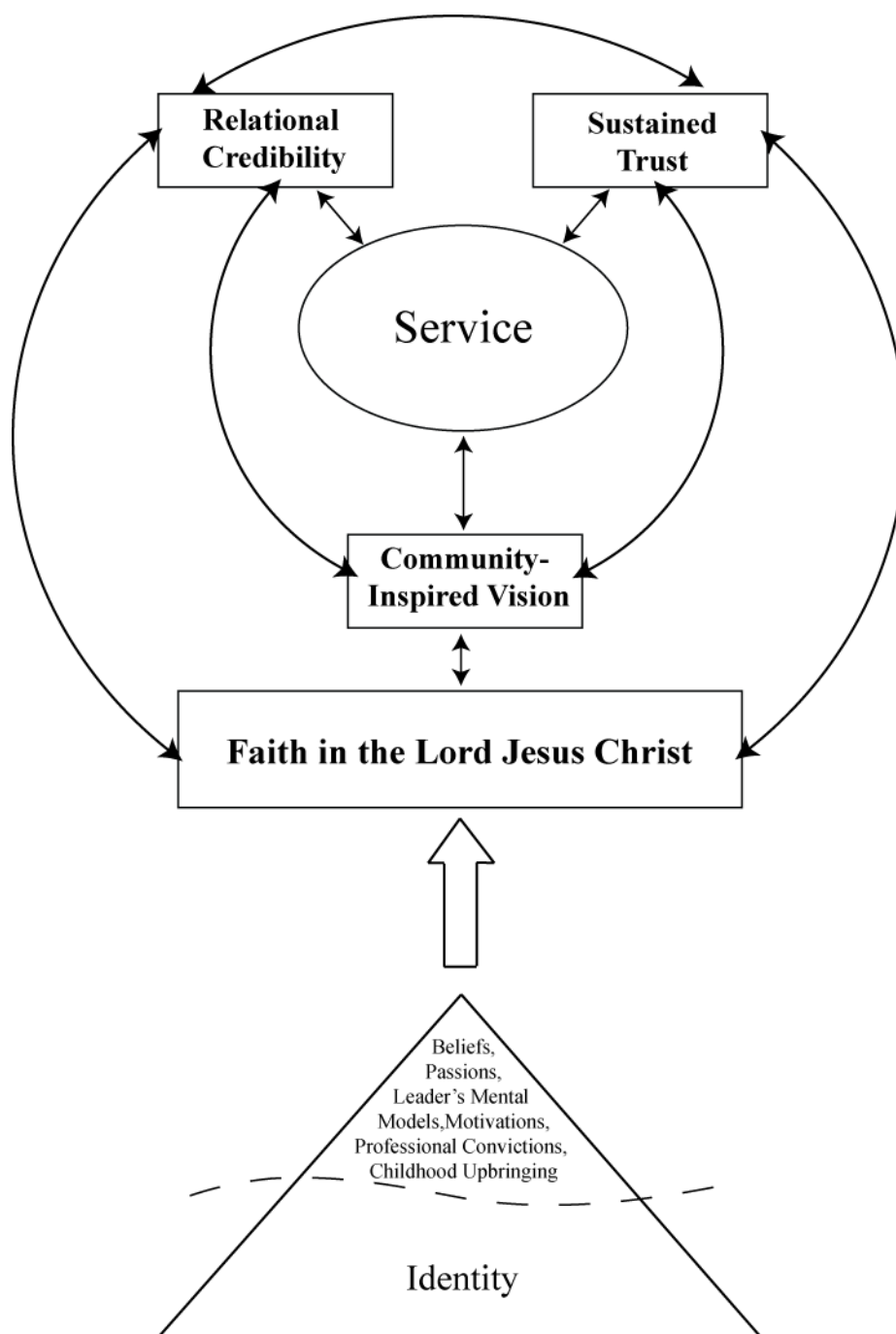


Figure 6.1. Conceptual framework revisited: Servant-leadership: Attributes and characteristics of servant-leadership leading to effective school community building.

These day-to-day characteristics are located within the diagram, but for lack of space have been presented in Table 6.1. They include Greenleaf's (1977) ten characteristics of servant-leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and community building. Additional characteristics revealed in my study are: collaboration, mutual support, support and care for constituents, fostering good relationships with followers, forgiveness, compassion, tenacity, courage, wisdom, admitting mistakes, humility, visibility, prayerfulness, good communication, honesty, truthfulness, kindness, consistency, fairness, respect for others, sharing successes, expression of appreciation for good efforts, openness, visibility of the leader, gentleness, role modeling, and altruism.

I emphasize that this framework may not be universally applicable for servant-leadership in all contexts, since it was derived from the environment of the Catholic or Christian school where faith in Jesus Christ forms the foundation of their leadership. The framework does not imply that successful leadership is only achievable through the Catholic perspective as expressed by participants. Leaders in non-Christian contexts might have their identities mediated through substitute dimensions instead of *Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ* as identified by participants.

Table 6.1

Day-to-day servant-leadership characteristics and their meanings

Day-to-day Servant-leadership Characteristics Emerging from Research	Meanings of Characteristics
Listening	Ability to pay attention in order to clarify the will of constituents
Empathy	Disposition towards understanding others, and recognizing their unique needs, gifts, and spirits
Prayerfulness	Communication with God for strength and wisdom to serve constituents in the most appropriate manner
Fairness	Dealing with followers and arriving at decisions devoid of discrimination and prejudice
Healing	Making whole communities and people with whom one comes in contact
Sharing successes	Acknowledgment of others as contributors to the successes of the community
Tenacity	Holding on to the course of a community-inspired vision in spite of challenges
Role modeling	Visible personal inspiring example worth emulating by members of the school community
Courage	Confidence to pursue one's community-inspired vision despite the misconceptions of detractors
Stewardship	Commitment to caring for followers and serving their interests for growth
Wisdom	Ability to utilize understanding and insight in dealing with situations
Awareness	Capacity to understand one's self and followers in order to be better disposed to serving them
Compassion	Consciousness of followers' needs in ways that elicit sympathy resulting in alleviating their needs.
Mutual support	Readiness of community members to promote the interests of each other
Honesty	Dealing and relating sincerely with constituents
Expression of appreciation	Visibly congratulating, valuing, encouraging, and making followers aware of their good efforts
Altruism	Unselfish devotion to the welfare of others
Collaboration	Respect for followers' opinions and involving them in leadership decision-making
Conceptualization	Thinking beyond day-to-day realities and dreaming great dreams for the good of the school community
Visibility	Public presence, conduct, and meaningful interactions of the leader with followers

Table 6. 1 continued

Day-to-day servant-leadership characteristics	Meanings of characteristics
Fostering good relationships with followers	Leader's ability to understand the import of healthy relationships with followers
Admitting mistakes	Ability to apologize in the face of an obvious mistake resulting in unfair treatment of a student, staff member, or a parent
Persuasion	Use of consensus building rather than control
Community building	The ability of the leader to galvanize members to pursue common goals and interests for stronger and better relationships
Respect for others	Politeness and kindness towards constituents
Humility	Quality of not esteeming one's self as being above all others to the extent of disregarding their opinions
Consistency	Absence of contradictions between the principal's words and actions
Forgiveness	Ability to untie one's self from thoughts and feelings that dictate revenge towards and punishment of the constituent
Gentleness	Capacity to treat followers with respect despite occasional disagreement on issues
Care for constituents	Keeping in mind that one's leadership is for the good of followers and not for one's selfish ends and fame
Openness	Capacity to be sincere with members of his/her school community
Honesty	Speaking the truth to and creating trust with followers
Truthfulness	Being realistic and without intention to deceive followers
Kindness	Consideration and humane treatment of followers
Foresight	Ability to understand past lessons in the context of present realities and making decisions in light of their likely consequences for the future
Good communication	Capacity to clearly articulate one's vision to followers and keeping constant information flow in the community

Participants suggested that without exhibiting the characteristics in Table 6. 1 as day-to-day circumstances would demand, servant-leadership remains only an ideology that has no practical consequences. Since servant-leadership concerns itself with service to followers and helping them to grow, these characteristics are some of the useful means to achieving that goal. Questions about the different strengths or hierarchy of the qualities of

the characteristics go beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the characteristics of servant-leadership identified should be viewed as a comprehensive inventory of the acknowledged and observed qualities from participants, and not as a hierarchy of qualities. Servant-leaders are not expected to have and exhibit all these qualities at one and the same time. There is only a hierarchy of importance as dictated by the situations that call for these.

Implications for Policy

The participants in this study were practicing Catholics keen on living their Catholic Faith within and outside the school. The policy requiring Catholic school principals to be practicing Catholics should be encouraged. The *Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association* (2003) has stated, "Faith is the deep concern of our Catholic educational communities today" (p. 13). Thus, the practicing Catholic school principal is a welcome sign of faith in the school community, and serves as an example of active Catholic faith for the encouragement of students and staff to live their Catholic faith, while also serving as an inspiration for non-Catholics interested in living their Christian faith.

Succession practices need to take the Catholic faith of aspiring principals into consideration as principals of Catholic schools are required to be examples of the Catholic faith to students, staff, and parents with whom they interact. Bennis and Nanus (1985) wrote that learning is the vital fuel for the leader, and serves as the origin of continually gaining new understanding, new ideas and new challenges. Those who do not learn do not survive long as leaders. In short, leaders are lifelong learners. In-service training sessions for principals would be appropriate forums for incumbent principals to

renew and gain additional knowledge that may be valuable for their role as servant-leaders.

It would be a worthwhile practice if induction programs for administrators of Catholic schools would include discussion on servant-leadership as the leadership style espoused by the school divisions in which new principals intend serving school communities. All participants in this study indicated that they did not specifically talk about servant-leadership because they preferred to show it by example than by word. Thus, mentorship programs for future principals need to put emphasis on servant-leadership so as to expose aspiring principals to firsthand experiences of servant-leadership in practice.

Catholic school divisions having servant-leadership as the leadership style prescribed for their administrators just like the Board of Greater Saskatoon Catholic school recommended in its *Code G: Personnel and Employee Relations* (paras, 1 & 7, 2004), should continue this policy as a way of encouraging their administrators to exercise leadership in imitation of the leadership style of Jesus and in service to Church, students, staff, parents, parish, and community.

Requiring all staff of Catholic schools to attend and participate in servant-leadership seminars, conferences, and retreats as a policy would be good practice as it is the staff in the schools that form the cohort of future school leaders. A policy that directors of Catholic school divisions make an intentional choice to promote servant-leadership would serve a good purpose, as participants in this study acknowledged having acquired some servant-leadership notions from former directors who actively promoted the leadership ideal.

Implications for Practice

Participants in this study seemingly preferred to exhibit servant-leadership through role modeling. Thus, they apparently shied away from talking directly about the leadership style. Even though this is a noble practice, principals in Catholic schools need to be encouraged to talk explicitly about servant-leadership, and in addition, to incorporate it in their school-level retreats and discussions.

The presentation of the symbols of rock, towel, and basin for washing the feet served as forceful images of servant-leadership that made a lasting impression on Denis and on me. The incorporation of these vivid symbols in the hiring process needs to be encouraged. These symbols could be conspicuously displayed at vantage points in schools for all leaders in the various capacities to see as a reminder of the leadership style required of them.

Principals should continue the practice of care and concern for students, staff, and parents, as a way of inculcating servant-leadership qualities in students and staff members in their developmental stages, and as they gain experience as future leaders respectively. Mulligan (2003) proffered the suggestion for the care and concern required of a Catholic school leader for followers when he said “Leadership in Catholic Education is not a career; it is a vocation” (p. 113).

Three participants identified directors as sources of their notions of servant-leadership. The practice of directors organizing servant-leadership conferences, seminars, and retreats is worth continuing.

Professional colleagues were acknowledged as contributing to participants’ notions of servant-leadership. Colleagues on staff need to give mutual support to each

other and engage in discussion on servant-leadership as a way of building up each other in the notions of the leadership style as they are the future leaders of their schools.

Participants were happy with the freedom allowed them to practice their faith in the school context. The practice of celebrating Mass, and of organizing liturgical activities should be encouraged as these serve not only in building the faith of school community members but also in community building.

Prayer that preceded meetings and gatherings was part of the fabric of participants' schools. This practice should continue as it sets the tone for the activity that follows prayer. Participants spoke about leading prayer over the intercom and promising to pray for members of their school communities. This show of concern is indicative of the leader's interest in constituents and has the advantage of eliciting trust from followers.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study concentrated mainly on the perceptions of principals of Catholic high schools, with very limited reference to the perceptions of other members of these school communities. To get a broader perspective of the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals, future research could be expanded to include parents, staff members, and students. Another possibility is a combination of the views of Catholic high school principals and those of Catholic elementary school principals. The claim in the literature that parental involvement is limited at the high school level (Constantino, 2007) was confirmed during my research. Research that combines Catholic high school principals and Catholic elementary school principals could possibly open up new understandings of

servant-leadership as seen from the perspective of elementary school principals as they usually have more parental engagement in their schools.

My research was conducted in Catholic school settings, and participants seemed to express similar ideas. It would be interesting to know the views of principals for whom faith in Jesus Christ is not a reason for their practice of servant-leadership. Future research could be expanded to include public high school principals in order to capture ideas from principals of non-Catholic school backgrounds for a diversified study.

The participants in my research were drawn from urban settings. Research that investigates the views of principals from rural settings would add to my research. A combination of a survey and interviews that capture the views of a wider participant group could open new vistas of information for general knowledge on servant-leadership.

Methodological Reflections

As I look back on this research, a question that comes to mind is; what would I do differently if I were to undertake this research again? Three main ideas come to mind.

First, I would add the perspectives of staff members and students in focus groups.

Second, I would limit the interviews to the holiday period when principals are less busy with school work. Third, (with participants' consent), I would vary the interview venues between participants' work places and other locations of their choice.

My aim was to focus on the perceptions of selected Catholic high school principals, and not to include the perspectives of staff members, students, and parents. However, I ended up including comments from the latter groups that complemented and supported some of what the principals articulated during interviews and observations. The enthusiasm with which some students and staff members engaged me in friendly

conversations, and the ideas they expressed, clarified some of the information provided by their principals during the interview and observation. Looking back on the study process, if I had to do the study again, I would add the perspectives of students and staff focus groups in order to have a broader view of the selected principals' servant-leadership role.

Four of the 12 interview sessions of the study were conducted while two respondents were on vacation. Reflecting on my interaction with participants during the interviews, I realize that with the exception of one telephone interview, the sessions undertaken during vacation time were longer and took place in a more relaxed atmosphere than those held during school hours and immediately after school. The reason for this difference may be the principals' less busy schedules during vacation time compared to their loaded to-do-lists during school time. Those interviewed during school hours or immediately after school seemed to provide very brief responses. Thus, in a repetition of this study, I would request participants to let me interview them during vacation time or after school.

All interview sessions took place in the offices of participants. To clarify a few points with one participant, we agreed to meet in a restaurant, and this relaxed atmosphere provided me with deeper insights into the previous interviews with him. Interviewing principals outside their normal places of work would probably provide more insightful data.

I appreciate the impressive patience and readiness of the participants to share their experiences. There were occasions during the interview sessions when a staff member interrupted the process and made me feel uneasy about making endless follow-up

questions that lengthened the interview and took participants away from their work. The observation periods were very enriching and definitely gave me a better understanding of the day-to-day running of a high school from the perspective of a servant-leader than I would have gained from the interviews alone.

Reflections on Servant-Leadership

I now offer some reflections on my understanding of servant-leadership on the basis of my interactions with the participants in this study, and on my general experience of servant-leaders. I recognize that servant-leadership is no panacea for all leadership problems, and that it differs from other leadership models in its special interest in the development of followers. Constituents are the reason for the leader's service, not reputation, wealth, or glory. Servant-leadership does not take followers for granted by pretending to know exactly what they feel, but takes the time required to develop empathy which entails getting close to followers to know exactly what their needs are. Showing interest in followers and supporting them in their needs is the way to establish one's credibility and trust in them. A servant-leader whose intent is to gain popularity would not do his/her community any good because the path of popularity could easily lead to visions that have no lasting value, and would direct whole communities into a limbo.

Servant-leaders offer inspirational leadership and bless their followers with their presence because of the hope they provide. If exercised in the right spirit, servant-leadership provides possibilities for constituents and makes leaders out of them by involving them in their own growth process. Blanchard and Hodges (2003) reminded servant-leaders that the way of serving their vision is by developing constituents in order

that they can work on that vision even when the leaders are not around. Servant-leaders are signs of light and of possibilities in the face of adversity, and especially in the school environment, they serve as beacons of hope for staff, students, and parents.

Administrators in the school environment who embrace servant-leadership are called upon to keep in mind that the leadership model goes beyond mere theoretical ideals. Servant-leadership demands practical relationships with members of the school community which result in the building of healthy learning school communities. Thus, it runs contrary to the mistaken assumptions of traditional leadership that power is might. In my understanding, servant-leadership sees power as an unmerited gift freely given by followers to be redistributed to them and not monopolized for the leader's personal gains (Sims, 2005). The authentic servant-leader is the one who seldom uses power. When he/she uses it, it is in the interest of followers, and as a manifestation of his/her care and concern for constituents and not an expression of the leader's greatness. Neuschel (2005) seemed to capture my thoughts on power when he observed, “. . . the leader by definition has the power to hurt, yet the mature servant-leader will rarely if ever use that power” (pp. 95-96). This reluctance to use power however does not imply a leadership model that is soft, or one that never resorts to accountability. Carver (2004) argued that power must be used. “But only servanthood tempers the power and makes it incorruptible. Servant-leadership, in other words, enables incorruptible power” (p. 31). Since servant-leadership aims at bringing the best out of followers by involving them in their own developmental process, the use of power in calling for accountability involves helping them to unlearn and change for the good of the whole community (McGee-Cooper, 1998).

I have come to perceive servant-leadership as a model that better serves both leader and followers if the leadership style is voluntarily embraced as an intentional choice because of its unselfish demands. Thompson (2005) reminded leaders, “. . . most of us have to struggle with the fact that the ego is there” (p. 110); but we need to re-awaken the understanding within ourselves that the ego is only a part of the self because we have a spiritual reality that is more than just the ego. The servant-leader must be ready to discipline his/her ego and rejoice in the success of followers, and must appreciate seeing followers develop and grow and achieve greater heights rather than perceiving their development as a challenge to his/her power and ego.

The servant-leader can better serve by cultivating the spirit of forgiveness as an additional means of disciplining the ego. Blanchard and Hodges (2005) reminded leaders with an ego problem that “Self-serving leaders react to things that happen to them. If you say something or do something that hooks their pride or fear, they *react*” (p. 51). When confronted with an offence, the best solution is to consider what is in the best interests of followers and their relationships in the community.

Servant-leadership is not a destination but an opportunity to increase one’s understanding of others and of one’s self, because the more one served with dedication, the better one became. The images of a caring mother or father fit the responsibilities of one who accepts to exercise leadership through the servant-leadership model. Braye (2002) pointed out “One cannot be better unless one cares enough” (p. 298). Looking out for perfection in people, especially neophytes, could easily lead to frustration. The servant-leader needs patience in order to bring out the best in followers. I emphasize that servant-leadership does not mean condoning mediocre performance, but rather that the

leader perceives potential in followers, and because of his/her interest in them utilizes opportunities to help them develop and grow. The detection of imperfection should serve as leverage to encourage the follower to aspire to better heights. It is healthy practice to focus on the good performances of the majority of followers and affirm them rather than to concentrate on those whose negative behavior could provide no direction or leads away from the right course of action.

Preoccupation with immediate results sets the servant-leader down the path of dissatisfaction. There is therefore the need to understand servant-leadership as setting in motion a series of causes and effects in followers that eventually set communities on the path to growth and development. Christian servant-leaders need to rely on faith that things will unfold and come to fruition. An example of this faith is the student who shows appreciation to a principal or staff member years after he/she has left school. The servant-leader needs to understand that the desire to control followers implies denying them their freedom which human nature naturally craves; but in the words of Ruschman (2002), “Servant-leadership offers new ways to capitalize on the knowledge and wisdom of all [in the community]” (p. 126).

Servant-leadership is time-intensive (Wheatley, 2004), and demands that the leader cultivate a genuine love for people with the sole aim of helping them develop and grow. This requires absolute patience and an unending desire to seek to understand rather than to condemn. As a result, a sensitivity to the needs of followers is a requirement for success. The leader has to appreciate the art of listening as paramount, because it is the way to understanding the needs of followers in order to serve them better. McEwan, (2003) stressed the importance of listening when she said, “. . . successful administrators

learn early in their careers that the ability to listen isn't just a nice thing to do, it is an essential skill to surviving and thriving in the principalship" (p. 7). The servant-leadership style requires simultaneously showing the way and being open to learn from situations and followers so as to lead to a constant renewal of communities.

Respect for constituents that issues from the leader's humility is a necessary condition for better service, because respect leads to an appreciation of the worth of followers and is also the beginning of collaboration. Stressing the need for collaboration in leadership, Moxley (2002) said, "Leadership is cocreated as individuals relate as partners and develop a shared vision, set a direction, solve problems, and make meaning of their work" (p. 47). Hubris is a deadly and destructive quality and is to be avoided as it breeds disrespect for the opinions of others and leads to unhealthy complacency in the leader thereby stifling initiatives. For Christian leaders like the participants of this study, Tan's (2006) observation is worth remembering, "Humility is an essential part of Christian . . . maturity . . . as well as of servanthood. Servanthood and humility are inseparable" (p. 88).

Ignoring relationships is comparable to working for people for whom one cares very little. Without healthy relationships with followers, servant-leadership has no meaning. It is through relationships that followers are assured of the care of the leader for them, thereby increasing their credibility and trust which are essential ingredients of community building. So important are relationships in leadership that when Braye (2002) divided the concept of leadership under three major components of self, relationships, and tasks/resources, he put six of Greenleaf's (1977) ten characteristics under relationships. These are: listening, empathy, healing, persuasion, commitment to growth

of people, and building community. He observed that leadership is based on relationships with people and considered to be more important than things. Servant-leadership opts for relationships as the basis for strong community building.

Christian servant-leaders need the support of faith in Jesus Christ as a condition for sustained hope in their daily interactions with followers. Adopting a prayer life and engaging in quiet time for meditation are helpful ways of deriving strength in the face of uncertainties. In today's challenging world, the strong enticement to abandon one's core beliefs of integrity and become a morally weak voice is strong. Servant-leadership demands a commitment to high moral standards in order to provide hope for followers in an uncertain world. Leaders need to brave the storms of misunderstanding in order to provide the way forward as role models. Thompson's (2005) observation is worth considering. He said, "Educational leadership is inseparable from moral leadership" (p. 100), and servant-leaders in schools have the moral purpose of developing young people into citizens who can contribute to democracy and chart their own moral course. Bennis (2004) expressed a similar view when he indicated that servant-leadership is a moral compass. And, that, one can be authentic in his/her commitments, but devoid of a moral compass, the outcomes of one's actions can be evil and destructive. School leaders need to serve as the moral voices that inculcate useful social values in the members of their school communities. Lenz and Bottum (1998) challenged servant-leaders to be the pointers to success in societies when they indicated that high moral values and excellence need to dictate the state of affairs in the twenty-first century if progress is to have positive meaning. Servant-leadership is a morally-based leadership style whose strength and sway on constituents is crystallized through personal moral example.

Tenacity is required of the servant-leader because success does not come without perseverance. Kahl (2004) argued that tenacity involves purposefulness, commitment, and “Hanging in there when times get tough” (p. 61). Procrastination without a genuine reason in dealing with the serious needs and affairs of followers breeds the impression that the leader is uninterested in the constituent. In the event of complicated problems, the way out is for the servant-leader to confront situations honestly and to avoid pretending that the problem did not exist.

Communication is important in a servant-leader, for, without it, the leader cannot make his/her ideas known, let alone explain his/her vision. Wheatley (1999) noted that effective communication changes organizations and builds trust for better performance. Visibility to constituents is required because it is by being present to them that communication can effectively take place. In the event of detractors, the way out is not to concentrate on their negativity but to focus on what is helpful and on what builds community spirit. The true servant-leader is one who through patience is able gradually to bring detractors to his/her side (Kahl, 2004).

Fassel (1998) found fun to be helpful in communities when he said, “Having fun and experiencing joy at work function like an immune system of the organization . . . When fun goes out of work, it is the sign that something is dysfunctional in the organization” (p. 225). Humor and fun are needed ingredients in communities where servant-leaders are the stewards, because when well executed, fun and humor have the power to lighten the follower’s day.

At the end of this study, like Sims (2005), I conclude that servant-leadership is akin to most internal qualities, that, “[it] is easier to define as what it is not than what it

is” (p. 29). Whether one’s practice of servant-leadership is based on belief in the Lord Jesus Christ or not, committed servant-leadership is more of a personal lifestyle anchored in the strength of faith and hope with a genuine interest in people’s welfare and development, and no one religious denomination or organization has the prerogative of servant-leadership.

Concluding Comment

This study explored the servant-leadership role of selected Catholic high school principals. It investigated the sources and substance of Catholic high principal’s notions of servant-leadership, how these principals perceived their servant-leadership role, and the manner in which this role was manifest and experienced by them.

Servant-leadership was perceived to be manifested through the multiple opportunities it offered for dealing with situations, and the promotion of collaborative leadership leading to the building of healthy school communities. The leadership model was not only seen as advantageous for better relationships that engendered the growth of followers, but it also presented some challenges and tensions.

The underlying theme of the findings of this study is that servant-leadership is a leadership style that provides hope for followers because of its special interest in helping them pursue their interests leading to their growth. In effect, servant-leadership is not about passivity, its community-building characteristic demands that all community members be inspired by the leader to get involved in their community. The servant-leader who conscientiously carries out his/her duties would be nurturing the growth of future servant-leaders while simultaneously developing personal growth toward greater heights of community service.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Instrument

Interview Questions

First Interview Session

Introductory Comments

1. Thank the participant for accepting to participate in the research.
2. Provide an overview of the purpose of the research.
3. Remind interviewee of length of interview session.
4. Assure participant of confidentiality of all responses and participant's liberty to refuse to answer any questions they feel uncomfortable with.
5. Get written consent letter signed and request permission to record interview and inform them that they may request stopping the recording at any time.
6. Allow participant to ask questions about their concerns before proceeding to interview questions.

Interview Questions (60-90 minutes)

The questions of the interview are semi-structured. Questions and responses will be reordered and follow-up questions may be asked when appropriate.

1. Please, tell me the highlights of your life story and some of the experiences that you believe have contributed to what you are today as a principal (family background, education, social, religious, etc).
2. How do you feel about being a principal in the Catholic school division?
3. Please share with me some of your experiences as a principal. What inspired your choice of the Catholic school division?
4. What does leadership in a Catholic high school mean to you?
5. When did you first hear of the term "servant-leadership?"

6. How have you come to understand the term and what it might look like in the world of the Catholic school principal?
7. How did you come to develop interest in the servant-leadership approach to leadership?
8. How have your personal and professional experiences influenced you in your practice of servant-leadership? Can you mention specific examples?
9. Please, share with me what you know about other leadership styles, and how you believe they differ from servant-leadership.
10. In what ways have your understandings of servant-leadership evolved during your principalship?
11. What role has your faith played in your commitment to the servant-leadership ideal?
12. In what ways do you think servant-leadership has informed your faith commitments or vice versa?
13. What motivates you in the practice of servant-leadership?
14. What in your experiences can you share with me as advantages of servant-leadership over other leadership styles?
15. In your view, why do you think servant-leadership is relevant in today's schools?
16. In your opinion, what are the strengths of servant-leadership in contemporary schools? Explain.
17. What would you like to add to the discussions we have just had in order to enrich this study?

Second Interview Session

1. How has servant-leadership been an asset to you in the building of a learning school community in your school? Can you mention specific examples?
2. The importance of vision for every leader is represented in the Biblical saying, “Where there is no vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18) What is the importance of vision to you as a servant-leader?
3. What is your response to his statement? Leadership in any endeavor is a moral task, but even more so for educational leaders (Sergiovanni, 1999). In what ways have you felt the relevance of this statement as a servant-leader?
4. How have the ten characteristics of servant-leadership (listening, empathy, healing awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community) been useful to you as a servant-leader? Could you briefly comment on each one of them?
5. Which of the ten characteristics of servant-leadership do you find yourself using most frequently?
6. “Service is the reason for leadership” (Bradley, 1999): From your experience as a servant-leader, how has service been reflected in your leadership, and how has service helped you grow as a servant-leader?
7. In your judgment, what do you think is the influence of your servant-leadership role on staff, parents, and students? Can you cite specific examples?
8. In course of interacting with staff, parents, and students, how have the values of servant-leadership helped you to be effective?

9. What challenges and tensions do you face as you exercise servant-leadership. Any particular examples?
10. As a servant-leader, how do you balance personal convictions and the demands of the school system?
11. From your experience, what are the costs: difficulties, burdens, and disappointments, of the servant-leadership ideal?
12. What strategies do you adopt for success in your exercise of servant-leadership?
13. What do you think parents, staff, students, and school community expect of you as a servant-leader? Explain.
14. What in your opinion are aspects of servant-leadership which other leadership styles do not have?
15. What are some experiences that would sometimes prompt you to prefer other leadership styles to servant-leadership? Have you sometimes regretted adopting the servant-leadership style?
16. For what reasons would you recommend servant-leadership to other principals?
17. What changes would you like to see or emphasized in the servant-leadership style of leadership?
18. I would appreciate suggestions and additions which you may wish to add to enrich this study.

APPENDIX B

Observation Protocol

Observation Protocol

Setting/ Individual Observed;

Interactions: Staff, students, parents (formal appointments, informal appointments, formal interactions, informal interactions, principal's comments, teacher's comments, parents' comments, students' comments, other comments)

Observer:

Time:

Place:

Length of Observation:

Descriptive notes:

(notes describing what occurred)

Description of what was observed in chronological order:

(eg. portraits of individuals, physical setting, events, and activities)

Reflective Notes

(notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, and themes)

Adapted from, Creswell, J. W (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and Evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, N. J: Merrill.

APPENDIX C

Application to (Behavioral) Ethics Review Board

Application for Approval of Research Protocol
Submitted to
University of Saskatchewan, Behavioural Research Ethics Board on, April 19, 2008.

- 1. Name of researcher(s):** Dr. Keith Walker
 Department of Educational Administration
 College of Education,
 University of Saskatchewan.
- 1a. Name of Student:** Joseph Nsiah, Ph. D. Candidate.
 Department of Educational Administration,
 College of education,
 University of Saskatchewan.
- 1b. Anticipated Start Date:** May 2008
Expected Completion Date: June, 2009
- 2. Title of Study:** *The Servant-leadership Role of Catholic High School Principals*

3. Abstract

A lot has been written about the necessity for both schools and leadership to be different from what they are today if they are to meet the challenges of the knowledge society (Walker & Sackney, 2007), because rapid changes and challenges of contemporary society have rendered school communities more complex (Maxcy, 1995; Mulligan, 2005). The need for a paradigm shift in leadership (Kuhn, 1996) to enable school leaders meet current challenges, and the needs of schools as learning communities has become all the more important. Leaders of Catholic schools are not sequestered from today's leadership challenges and therefore need a leadership style able to respond to contemporary challenges. Servant-leadership, a moral leadership ideal (Bennis, 2004) that can help shift traditional notions of leadership, and prepare institutions to face the challenges of an uncertain future has been recommended (Crippen, 2006).

Servant-leadership is not the exclusive way to view leadership, but for Catholic high school principals, it is an essential expression of their vocation within the faith community where they exercise leadership (Walker & Scharf, 2001). The purpose of the study is to explore the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals, and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives.

The following research questions direct the study: 1) What are the sources and substance of Catholic high school principals' notions of servant-leadership? 2) What are Catholic high school principals' perceptions of their servant-leadership role? 3) How is servant-leadership manifest and experienced by Catholic high school principals in their daily professional lives?

4. Funding: Self-funded

5. Expertise: Not applicable

6. Conflict of Interest: Not applicable

7. Participants:

Participants will be selected for this study. I will send letters to the Directors of Catholic high school principals in the eight Catholic school divisions of Saskatchewan asking to conduct one-on-one semi-structured interviews with selected high school principals, and observe two of the interview participants for a period of two weeks each (see Appendix D). When the Directors approve, I will contact principals by telephone and e-mail to determine their willingness to volunteer their participation. Based on the insight of each of the principals regarding servant-leadership, and their consent to consider participation, I will choose at least one participant from each school division, and explain the study to them. After receiving their verbal expression of interest, I will send them a written explanation of the study (see Appendix D), followed by a written and signed consent (see Appendix E). Interview questions will be formulated, and the eight selected principals will be interviewed through two one-on-one interview sessions (see Appendix A). The interviews will last between 60 to 90 minutes per session.

At the beginning of each interview session, I will review participants' rights as outlined within the consent form (see Appendix E). Two respondents from the interviewees will be further selected for shadowing for a period of two weeks each (see Appendix D).

It is important to underline that I do not have any prior relationship with any of the potential participants, nor do I intend to have a continued relationship with participants after completion of the study.

7a. Recruitment Material:

The recruitment material will include the following:

- a) Invitation Letter to Directors (see Appendix D).
- b) Invitation Letter to selected high school principals to participate in the interviews (see Appendix D).
- c) Invitation Letter to selected high school principals for observation (see Appendix D).
- d) Individual Interview Questions for Interview participants (see Appendix A)
- e) Consent form (see Appendix E).
- f) Data/Transcript Release Form (see Appendix F).

8. Consent:

- a) A copy of the letter seeking Directors' permission to interview selected high school principals, and observe any of the selected principals in their school divisions is attached to this application (Appendix D).
- b) Copies of the correspondence requesting high school principals to participate in the study are attached to this application (Appendix D).
- c) A copy of the form soliciting participants' consent is attached to this application (Appendix E).

Each consent form:

- i) outlines in detail the purpose, length of time, and potential risks and benefits of participating in the study;

- ii) informs participants about the procedures involved in the study, the storage of data collected from the study, the confidentiality involved in the study, the volunteer nature of taking part in the study;
- iii) explains the researcher's readiness to be addressed questions at any point in the study at the contact information provided, and that the research has received approval on ethical grounds on [date] by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Sciences Research Ethics Board to whom questions may be addressed at (306) 966 2084, and that conducting interviews, and observing principals has been approved by the Directors on [date].
- iv) provides space for signatures of participants in the event they agree to participate.

9. Methods/ Procedures:

I will collect data via two one-on-one semi-structured interview (see Appendix A) sessions with eight selected Catholic high school principals, two of whom will be further selected for observation (see Appendix D) for a period of two weeks each. Interviews will last between 60 to 90 minutes per session. Interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed. In the event of a need to clarify some findings or more information required to enrich the data, I will request respondents to avail themselves for follow-up interviews.

In course of the observation, two times during the day (in the morning, and after school), I will engage respondents in conversation for a period of 10 to 15 minutes to clarify or explain events that might need further clarification. I plan to keep a journal to make descriptive notes reflecting ideas, concepts, categories, themes, and metaphors that emerge from the observations and discussions with observation participants. I will use actual quotes of the participants in data analysis.

10. Storage of Data:

During and after completion of the study, all data collected will be securely stored by Dr. Keith Walker, my research advisor at the University of Saskatchewan for a period of five years, and then destroyed.

11. Dissemination of Results:

Participants will be informed that the data collected and the results of the study will be shared with the faculty of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan, and possibly in published articles, seminars, and/or conferences. In respect of anonymity, pseudonyms will be used when referring to the school division, schools, and principals.

12. Risk, Benefits, and Deception:

There are no anticipated risks or deception in this research. Participants will be informed of the purpose, and reason for participating, and may withdraw at any time without penalty. There will be no Church hierarchical relationship with participants in the education system. Relationships will be maintained on researcher-participant level, with participants having the right to withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort (and without loss of relevant entitlements, without affecting participants' status as Catholic high school principals).

- a) Participants within this study would not involve any vulnerable persons such as people in emotional distress, people who are physically ill, and people who have recently experienced a traumatic event.
- b) Participants in this study are not considered members of a captive or dependent population.
- c) There is no institutional/power relationship between the participants and me.
- d) Within my data/files, I will take measures to protect the participants' anonymities.
- e) Third parties will not be exposed to loss of confidentiality/anonymity.
- f) Interviews will be audio-taped upon receiving participants' permission.
- g) Participants within this study will not actively be deceived or misled.
- h) The research procedures will be accommodating to the respondents' time and preference of location. As well, observation dates will be selected with participants' consent so as not to inconvenience them.
- i) I do not intend to ask questions that are personal, embarrassing or upsetting to participants.
- j) I will conduct the semi-structured interviews and the observations in a manner that respects the dignity and rights of the participants.
- k) Participants within this study will not embark on any perceived social risks.
- l) The research will not infringe on respondent's rights such as restricting access to education or treatment.
- m) Participants in this study will not receive compensation of any type.
- n) No foreseeable harm is associated with this study.

13. Confidentiality:

Confidentiality and anonymity will be observed throughout the study. Confidentiality will be preserved by the use of pseudonyms for real names in transcripts, analysis, and any document that results from this study. The school divisions of participants will not be identified. Specific details which would enable a reader to deduce the respondents' identities within interviews will be made more generic.

14. Data/Transcript Release:

Participants will be given the opportunity to review final transcripts to ensure they accurately reflect what they said or intended to say. Participants will be afforded the right to clarify, add, or remove any or all of their responses. To acknowledge that the transcripts accurately reflect what was said in the interview and to authorize the release of the transcript to me, the respondents will sign a Data/Transcript Release Form (see Appendix F).

15. Debriefing and Feedback:

Feedback will be given to participants in course of the study. Respondents will be informed that the completed dissertation will be available at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education Library and the Department of Educational Administration, and that upon request, participants will be furnished with a summary of the report.

16. Required Signatures:

This proposal has been reviewed and is recommended for approval.

 Dr. Keith Walker, Faculty Advisor

 Date

 Joseph Nsiah (Student)

 Date

 Dr. Edwin Ralph, Ed. Adm. (Acting Dept. Head)

 Date

17. Required Contact Information:

Dr. Keith Walker
 Educational Administration
 College of Education, U of S
 28 Campus Drive
 Saskatoon, SK.
 S7N 0X1
 966-7623
 966-7020 (fax)
 Keith.walker@usask.ca

Joseph Nsiah
 St. Philip Neri Church
 1904 Munroe Ave
 Saskatoon, SK
 S7J 1R8
 343-0325
 343-0900 (fax)
 josephnsiah@hotmail.com

Dr. Edwin Ralph
 (Acting Dept. Head)
 College of Educ. U of S
 28 Campus Drive
 Saskatoon, SK
 966-7583
 966-7020
 edwin.raph@usask.ca



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
Keith D. Walker

DEPARTMENT
Educational Administration

BEH#
08-102

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon SK

STUDENT RESEARCHERS
Joseph Nsiah

SPONSOR
UNFUNDED

TITLE
The Servant-Leadership Role of Catholic High School Principals

ORIGINAL REVIEW DATE
19-Apr-2008

APPROVAL ON
27-May-2008

APPROVAL OF:
Ethics Application
Consent Protocol

EXPIRY DATE
26-May-2009

Full Board Meeting ☐

Date of Full Board Meeting:

Delegated Review ☒

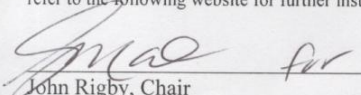
CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics_review/


John Rigby, Chair

University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:

Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Room 302 Kirk Hall, 117 Science Place
Saskatoon SK S7N 5C8
Telephone: (306) 966-2975 Fax: (306) 966-2069



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)

Certificate of Re-Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Keith D. Walker

DEPARTMENT

Educational Administration

Beh #

08-102

INSTITUTION (S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT

University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon SK

STUDENT RESEARCHER(S)

Joseph Nsiah

SPONSORING AGENCIES

UNFUNDED

TITLE:

The Servant-Leadership Role of Catholic High School Principals

RE-APPROVED ON

29-May-2009

EXPIRY DATE

25-May-2010

Full Board Meeting ☐

Delegated Review ☒

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

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John Rigby, Chair

University of Saskatchewan

Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to:

Research Ethics Office
University of Saskatchewan
Box 5000 RPO University
1607 - 110 Gymnasium Place
Saskatoon, SK Canada S7N 4J8

APPENDIX D

Letters of Transmittal

Letter to Directors

St. Philip Neri Church
Munroe Avenue
Saskatoon, SK
S7J IR8
Telephone: (306)-343 0325
Fax: (306)-343 0900
e-mail: josephnsiah@hotmail.com

April 10, 2008

Dear Director,

I am a Roman Catholic priest from the Diocese of Jasikan, Ghana, West Africa. I have served as an assistant principal, and acted as principal in the absence of the principal of a high school in Ghana where I practiced the servant-leadership ideal for three years. I am currently a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. I am conducting a research on the servant-leadership role Catholic high school principals. The study has been approved by the Department of Educational Administration and the Behavioural Science Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study is to explore the servant-leadership role of principals in Catholic high schools and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. I am seeking permission from you to contact some high school principals in your school division to assist me in the study. Being a multi-method study, the research will involve semi-structured interviews, and observing of selected principals.

The study speculates that leaders of Catholic high schools are not sequestered from today's leadership challenges, and the rapid changes of contemporary society have rendered school communities more complex. Thus the need for school leaders to meet current challenges, and the needs of schools as learning communities have become all the more important. Servant-leadership ideal can help shift traditional notions of leadership and prepare institutions to face an uncertain future. It is expected that the research will highlight multiple ways in which servant-leadership can be practiced in Catholic high schools in contemporary times when school populations present complex problems to school leaders.

I wish to confidently assure you that serious effort will be made to avoid identifying any school, school division, and principal by interview and (or) observation data.

In case you have any concerns or you would appreciate additional information, you may contact Dr. Keith Walker (email: keith.walker@usask.ca) my advisor at 966-7623 or myself at 343 0325. If your preference is by writing, you may contact me at St. Philip Neri Church, 1904 Munroe Avenue, Saskatoon, SK. S7J IR8 or if by e-mail, my address is josephnsiah@hotmail.com. Thanks for considering this request.

Yours Sincerely,

Joseph Nsiah

Letter to Interview Participants

St. Philip Neri Church
1904 Munroe Avenue
Saskatoon, SK
S7J IR8
Telephone: (306)-343 0325
Fax: (306)-343 0325
e-mail: josephnsiah@hotmail.com

April 10, 2008

Dear Participant,

I am a Roman Catholic priest from the Diocese of Jasikan, Ghana, West Africa. I have served as an assistant principal, and acted as principal in the absence of the principal of a high school in Ghana where I practiced the servant-leadership ideal for three years. I write this letter to ask if you will volunteer to participate in a study which has been approved by the Department of Educational Administration and the Behavioural Science Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study is to explore the servant-leadership role of principals in Catholic high schools and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. Being a multi-method study, the research will involve semi-structured interviews, and observation. By courtesy of this letter, I am requesting your assistance as a participant of the semi-structured interviews of the study. There will be two sessions of 60 to 90 minutes each. Your participation in the research is completely voluntary.

The study speculates that leaders of Catholic high schools are not sequestered from today's leadership challenges, and changes of contemporary society have rendered school communities more complex. Thus the need for school leaders to meet current challenges, and the needs of schools as learning communities have become all the more important. Servant-leadership ideal can help shift traditional notions of leadership and prepare institutions to face an uncertain future. It is expected that the research will highlight multiple ways in which servant-leadership can be practiced in Catholic schools in contemporary times when school populations present complex problems to school leaders.

I wish to confidently assure you that serious effort will be made to avoid identifying your school, school division, and yourself in the results of the study.

In case you have any concerns or you would appreciate additional information, you may contact Dr. Keith Walker (email: ketih.walker@usask.ca) my advisor, at 966-7623 or myself at 343 0325. If your preference is by writing, you may contact me at St. Philip Church, 1904 Munroe Avenue, Saskatoon, SK, S7J IR8 or if by e-mail, my address is josephnsiah@hotmail.com

Thanks for considering this request.

Yours Sincerely,

Joseph Nsiah

Letter to Observation Participants

St. Philip Neri Church
Munroe Avenue
Saskatoon, SK
S7J IR8
Telephone: (306)-343 0325
Fax: (306)-343 0325
e-mail: josephnsiah@hotmail.com

April 10, 2008

Dear Participant,

I am a Roman Catholic priest from the Diocese of Jasikan, Ghana, West Africa. I have served as an assistant principal, and acted as principal in the absence of the principal of a high school in Ghana where I practiced the servant-leadership ideal for three years. I write this letter to ask if you will volunteer to participate in a study which has been approved by the Department of Educational Administration and the Behavioural Science Research Ethics Board of the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the study is to explore the servant-leadership role of principals in Catholic high schools and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. Being a multi-method study, the research will involve semi-structured interviews, and observation. By courtesy of this letter, I am requesting your assistance as a participant for the observation phase of the research, where I will shadow you for two weeks during school hours. Two times during the day (in the morning and after school), I will request to meet with you for 10 to 15 minutes to clarify or explain phenomena I have observed for which further explanation is needed. Your consent to this request is completely voluntary.

The study speculates that leaders of Catholic high schools are not sequestered from today's leadership challenges, and changes of contemporary society have rendered school communities more complex. Thus the need for school leaders to meet current challenges, and the needs of schools as learning communities have become all the more important. Servant-leadership ideal can help shift traditional notions of leadership and prepare institutions to face an uncertain future. It is expected that the research will highlight multiple ways in which servant-leadership can be practiced in Catholic schools in contemporary times when school populations present complex problems to school leaders.

I wish to confidently assure you that serious effort will be made to avoid identifying, your school, school division, and yourself in the results of the study.

In case you have any concerns or you would appreciate additional information, you may contact Dr. Keith Walker (email: keith.walker@usask.ca) my advisor at 966-7623 or myself at 343 0325. If your preference is by writing, you may contact me at St. Philip Neri Church, 1904 Munroe Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7J IR8 or if by e-mail, my address is josephnsiah@hotmail.com

Thanks for considering this request.

Yours Sincerely,

Joseph Nsiah

APPENDIX E

Participant Consent Form

Letter of Consent for Participation in Research

I appreciate your participation in this study. This is a consent form whereby you as a participant indicate that you are willing to be involved in the study **The servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals**. The proposed research was reviewed and approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research on _____, 2008. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions you might have.

Supervisor: Dr. Keith Walker, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan; phone 966-7623, e-mail: keith.walker@usask.ca

Researcher: Joseph Nsiah, Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Phone: 343 0325, e-mail: josephnsiah@hotmail.com

Purpose and Procedure: The purpose of this study is to explore the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals, and investigate how this leadership ideal is manifested in their daily professional lives. The benefit of the study to you personally is the possibility that your thinking regarding servant-leadership would be stimulated. The procedure to be employed to generate information will be through semi-structured interviews, and observation. You are invited to take part in the interviews and may be subsequently invited to take part in the observation phase of the study. The semi-structured interviews of two sessions each will last between 60 to 90 minutes per session. Observation will take two weeks where I will be present at your school during school hours. For the semi-structured interviews, you will have the prerogative of the choice of venue where you feel most comfortable. In the event you are interviewed and/or shadowed, you will have the opportunity to review the transcriptions and reports, and discuss any thoughts, add, alter, and delete information from transcripts as appropriate. You can also express concern and reaction you have towards my analysis. During the period of the study, I will keep contact with you for clarification and additional information.

Potential Benefits: This study may highlight multiple ways in which servant-leadership can be practiced in Catholic high schools in contemporary times when school populations present complex problems to school leaders.

Potential Risks: The research will be carried out in a spirit of mutual respect between you and myself. There are no foreseeable risks and there will be no deception. Direct quotations from the interview will be reported. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by the use of pseudonyms in respect of you, your school, and school division. The greatest care will be taken to protect your anonymity. There will be no Church hierarchical relationships between you and me. Relationships will be kept on researcher participant level.

Storage of Data: Throughout the interviews, observation, and the study period, I will keep all tapes, transcripts, and reports in a safe and secure place. At the end of the study period, the data collected from you will be kept in a secure place at the University of

Saskatchewan, Department of Educational Administration with Dr. Keith Walker for five years and in consonance with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines.

Confidentiality: Data obtained from interviews, and reports from observation will be used for my PhD dissertation in partial completion for Doctor of Philosophy degree. The final versions of the research paper will not be confidential but will be released to the public probably as an article in a scholarly journal or for a presentation at a conference. However, prior to this release, you will be consulted on any material you do not wish made public, or any material you wish deleted. You will be referred to by a pseudonym in published reports.

Right to Withdrawal: Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort, without loss of status as a Catholic high school principal, or without loss of services at the University of Saskatchewan. In the event of withdrawal, the data collected from the survey, interviews, tape recordings, and reports will be destroyed.

Questions: If you have any questions regarding your participation or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to ask at any point. If you have questions at a later time, do not hesitate to contact me. This study has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on May 27, 2008. You may contact the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan (966-2084) concerning any questions regarding your rights as a participant, or myself, Joseph Nsiah at 343 0325 or e-mail me at josephnsiah@hotmail.com. You may also request a summary of findings at the completion of the study

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided above. I have been accorded the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been satisfactorily answered. I am aware of the nature of the study and understand what is expected of me and also understand that I am free to withdraw at anytime in course of the study. A consent form has been given to me for my records.

(Name of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Participant)

(Signature of Researcher)

APPENDIX F

Transcript Release Form

Transcript Release Form

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with [name of researcher]. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to [name of researcher] to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher